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ABSTRACT

This document contains 19 papers on gender, innovation, and education in Latin America. The following papers are included: "Introduction" (Ingrid Jung); "Reflections on the Gender Perspective in Experiences of Non-Formal Education with Women" (Lilian Celiberti); "Gender and Innovation" (Graciela Messina); "Towards a Pedagogy of Education Programmes for Grassroots Women" (Miryan Zuniga E.); "The Education Dimension in Projects with Women" (Manuel Bastias U.); "Everyday Violence and Women's Education in Latin America" (Linda King); "Participatory Action Research from a Gender Perspective: A Methodology" (Clara Ines Mazo Lopez); "A Gender Education Programme for Women and Men" (Cecilia Barraza); "Self-Diagnosis for Peasant Women" (Carmen Llanos Badaui); "Gender and Development among Peasant Women" (Josefa Ramirez); "Salvadorian Women and Feminist Theory in Popular Education" (Norma Vazquez); "The Motherhood We Experience and Want: An Experience with Working Women" (Maria de Lourdes Valenzuela); "Women Leaders for Women Victims of War" (Yanet Palomino); "Legal Facilitators School" (Hogla Teruel); "Rural Women as Actors in Development: The Training of Leaders" (Irma Estela Aguirre); "A School for Grassroots Women Leaders" (Ana Maria Robles); "Peasant and Indigenous Women's Social and Political Participation" (Vivian Gavilan); "Family Leaders for Health

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Development" (Angela Rocio Acosta); "Women and Local Development in Popular Sectors in Urban Areas" (Valeria Sanchez); and "Self-Management in Indigenous Women's Handicrafts Micro-Businesses" (Mireya Barrios Rosso). Five papers contain substantial bibliographies. Lists of abbreviations and contributors are appended. (MN)

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Gender, Innovation and Education in Latin America

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Ingrid Jung

and

Linda King

(eds.)

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Ingrid Jung and **Linda King (eds.)**

Gender, Innovation and Education in Latin America

UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE)
Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung (DSE)
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Cover picture: Doña Delfina of The Women's Literacy Group of the Sociedad Agroindustrial Fuerza Campesina Mixquic, Mexico -
Photo courtesy of Judith Kalman.
UNESCO pays tribute to older women learners in the International Year of Older Persons, 1999

Like interwoven threads, social spaces of mutual learning are created among the groups of women. The diversity of the woven design is the result of exploring and motivating people to create, initiate, appreciate group work, discover through play, make decisions, negotiate proposals and construct identities.

Angela Rocío Acosta
CIMDER, Colombia

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Introduction

The publication of this book on women's non-formal education in Latin America arises from a series of activities jointly organized by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) focusing on innovative education processes. A three-year research programme analysed a range of non-formal adult education programmes in countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Case studies enabled the analysis of specific themes, such as the role of pedagogy, gender, the relations between groups and institutions, and the way in which educational projects respond to the specific needs of groups of people in particular contexts. This book focuses on the outcomes of one of the seminars, which was held in Melgar, Colombia, on innovation, gender and pedagogy in Latin America in the context of women's non-formal education in the region. It is a synthesis of an earlier seminar report produced in Spanish, and contains a selection of some of the most significant contributions and case studies presented.

In the first section of the book the focus is on the theoretical considerations regarding the main themes, namely, gender, innovation, social context and non-formal education. The articles written by Miryan Zúñiga, Linda King and Lilian Celiberti examine various aspects of gender. Linda King analyses the different forms of violence that affect the life of women in Latin America whereas Miryan Zúñiga and Lilian Celiberti look at gender issues in education for women. Manuel Bastias, Lilian Celiberti and Miryan Zúñiga approach the theme of pedagogy in non-formal education for women from different angles. Graciela Messina analyses the concept of innovation in education on the basis of the discussions held at the seminar in Melgar, placing it in the context of Latin America.

The following sections of the book concentrate on presentations of the case studies by their protagonists themselves. We have grouped these into different kinds of projects according to the themes which are at the core of their work. The second section of the book therefore includes those programmes which are primarily concerned with gender issues. The third section includes those programmes dealing more specifically with women's leadership. In section four, the focus is on health and women's education, and section five looks at some examples of practice in women's non-formal education for economic development in Latin America. Despite the wide variety in programmes, common elements can be recognized in the specific problems which they face and the methods used in their varying contexts, such as the creativity, commitment and professional competence of the women heading the projects. Knowing the context in which each project has developed also allows us to understand its approach clearly and to identify the design. These descriptions provide us with a panorama of the various forms of oppression suffered by women in Latin America through gender, social class and ethnic discrimination. They also suggest possible solutions or ways to respond to all these forms of oppression, namely through processes of interaction, learning and the use of new skills in educational and organizational programmes in which women reclaim their dignity and humanity.

During the research programme itself, the focus was on the concept of innovation in non-formal education and how it links educational approaches, contents, methods, materials, and personal and institutional configurations to each specific context – in other words, what we call "innovation in context".[1] The conclusion was

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[1] The results of this research programme have been published in both English and Spanish: Werner Mauch and Uta Papen (eds.), 1997, *Making a Difference: Innovations in Adult Education*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften; 1997,

that in the social and educational field, innovation cannot be defined as a new step. Rather, it is something created and re-created by the agents involved, in a process that is implemented only when and if it is of relevance to them within the context in which the education programme is developed. By this we do not mean to imply that each programme develops in isolation. On the contrary, the vast spectrum of educational, organizational and conceptual possibilities created in programmes of this kind allows for exchange and borrowing wherever relevant.

Once the research programme was concluded, those participating in it agreed that in furthering this whole process there should be no concentration on dissemination or training. Instead, people involved in certain types of non-formal adult education programmes should have the opportunity to discuss, exchange and analyse their experiences. As a result, two seminar/workshops were held. The first one took place in Thailand and referred to innovation in social projects in Asia.[2] The second one, in Melgar, Colombia, which was jointly organized by DSE, UIE and CAFAM (the Colombian Family Compensation Fund), looked at innovation in women's social projects. It is this seminar in Melgar that has provided the material for this book. Although the presentations made at it were fully published in Spanish under the title *Hacia una pedagogía de género*, we have now produced this abridged version with selected case studies in English so that those

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Marcando la diferencia: Innovaciones en educación de adultos, Bogotá: Editorial Voluntad.

[2] The main theme in this seminar was the organization of learning processes enabling the participants to develop survival skills in contexts of poverty. The proceedings of this seminar were published in: Nirantar (ed.), 1997, *Learning to Survive. Exploring Linkages between Adult Education and Survival,* Bonn: DSE.

interested in, or who may be able to benefit from, the experiences of the women's organizations in Latin America may do so.[3]

The situation in which Latin American women live is characterized by such levels of poverty that they are forced to accept extremely hard and even degrading working conditions; by such levels of violence, both within and outside the family, that they often live under constant pressure and fear; and lastly, by such low participation levels in all political decision-making processes that their voices are not heard nor their needs taken into account in national programmes. Although this situation is unfortunately all too real for most of the women in each of the countries represented by projects in this book, the intention is not to describe these appalling conditions. We hope instead to portray a social practice that allows interaction to take place among women, thus generating learning processes that enable them to be better equipped, both in intellectual and emotional terms, to face the specific conditions that characterize their lives.

Gender relations, the pedagogy developed by non-formal education programmes and the generation of innovations were the

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[3] We would like to thank all the participants in this seminar for their enthusiasm and competence: Miryan Zúñiga and Manuel Bastias of the Innovation team as well as Graciela Messina and Lilian Celiberti for their support in the seminar's conceptual development; María Auxiliadora Consuegra from CAFAM for her commitment to the seminar's organization and for the pleasant stay we had at CAFAM's Holiday Resort in Melgar. María Salgado and Elizabeth Steiner were in charge of processing the texts and designing the book. Leslie Pascoe translated the original texts into English, Angela Ronai worked on some of the editing process and Isabel Meyn was the main technical support person.

main themes to emerge from the presentations on the various projects and formed the basis for discussion at the seminar.

Although all these projects are with, by and for women, the gender perspective is not necessarily the same. Through the discussions in Melgar we reached an understanding of what the gender dimension is and how it can be variously incorporated into educational and organizational activities. Not all women's projects are critical of the way the relationship between man and woman has developed or of the form this relationship still takes in Latin American societies. However, the fact that the women's situation is being analysed from a gender perspective, and that these projects focus on women's needs in their broadest sense, implies going beyond the traditional model, which aims to maintain the status quo by providing training opportunities which include an examination of women's customary role. Under the present conditions of poverty, violence and social and political exclusion, the intention is to study these conflicts and to plan strategies together with the women which will enable them to face this situation with new skills and know-how.

It is education that is the second main theme. Non-formal adult education in women's projects does not aim to teach specific knowledge but rather to encourage interaction and to develop learning processes that allow women not only to become competent in handling their own situation but also to develop individual skills. By interacting with other women they are able to take on new social roles and to gain the political space they need in order to improve the circumstances of their lives. These education processes are conceived as opportunities for women to consider all their problems, concerns, emotions and recreational needs.

Lastly, innovation cannot be separated from the other themes since each context requires a concept of education that corresponds to the participants' demands. Innovations emerge when those

involved in the development of learning processes and personal and collective learning, i.e. those in charge of the programmes as well as the participants, constantly monitor the course of these processes and adjust the programmes. This inevitably requires the programmes' organizers to change their perspective in regard to traditional methodology. It is not only a question of offering a certain type of education programme, but of negotiating it with the participants in order to ensure that it remains relevant.

Through this publication we would like to contribute to the exchange of experience and ideas which is of such vital importance, not only for raising greater awareness of each individual's work, but also for inspiring ourselves, stimulating our imagination and enriching our professional practice.

Ingrid Jung
DSE

Linda King
UIE

SECTION 1:

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chapter 1

Reflections on the Gender Perspective in Experiences of Non-Formal Education with Women

Lilian Celiberti

Those who want to codify the meanings of words will fight a lost battle, because words, like ideas and the things they are meant to mean, have history. (J.W. Scott)

Introduction

In the last two decades many training projects and initiatives for women have developed in Latin America, but theoretical works that systematize the experiences and debates are still inadequate. The initiative of the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and the Colombian Family Compensation Fund (CAFAM) to hold a seminar where experiences of innovative projects of non-formal education with women could be exchanged so as to "advance in the construction of analytical categories that permit the conceptualization and systematization of education projects with women", in fact showed that the projects presented were very different both in their theoretical orientation and in their actual objectives and institutional frameworks. Most of the projects, however, were created by women's organizations, which in itself lends special perspective to the analysis.

It could be said that in most women's projects, the educational dimension has not yet been differentiated from social or political practice and that there is no structured analysis or systematization of the educational process. Usually, some ordering or codification occurs as the result of an educational project but this information does not take into account the true breadth or complexity of the processes involved.

In adult education in Latin America, non-governmental institutions of basic education have played an important role. The theoretical and methodological basis of popular education has been debated for more than a decade, and this has helped to reveal its ambiguities and theoretical weaknesses. Although this paper does not aim to revise the history of these education movements, we must point out that in most countries the close link with the "most unprotected sectors" has established a dynamic of change and a critical review of their assumptions against a background of absence or disinterest on the part of government bodies.

The link between the adult education movement and the women's movement in Latin America is still weak, giving rise to major difficulties in the mutual enrichment of educational and institutional practices from a gender perspective:

> "We could say that the 1980s were not a lost decade for women, as they were for the economies and societies of our continent, because the women's movement achieved great development, but its critical opinions on gender discrimination did not manage to penetrate to the body of non-governmental organizations that were important actors in that period." (Váldez, 1996)

This statement holds an interesting challenge for the future as it assumes, in the first place, the systematization of the major institutional, personal and economic efforts in lifelong education

and training and, in the second place, greater theoretical analysis of the concepts that contribute to educational and social practices in women's organizations.

One of these concepts is gender, but what innovative contribution does it make to educational practices and what is the meaning of the gender perspective as far as adult education is concerned?

Women in development

Following the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, international organizations and co-operation agencies began to promote an "awareness of the absence" of women in development programmes, and the need for their inclusion in them. This gave rise to the "women in development" concept which was a feature of the first decade of systematic work with women in the region. The central tenets of this concept can be summarized thus:

- Women's economic contribution to society must be recognized and they must be explicitly and actively incorporated into development programmes.
- Projects aimed at women have a great impact on families, and greater economic independence for women will lead to their incorporation into society on equal conditions.
- The presence of women in health and nutrition projects, etc., is a greater guarantee of their success. Women play a key role in combating poverty and in reducing the birth rate in the poorest sectors.
- It is important, for the objectives stated, to generate programmes of education, health and human rights for women.

At the same time, and as a result of this conference, resources for research in Latin America were made available and thus the

first women's study centres, feminist studies and debates emerged. The systematic practice of working with women as well as the existence of feminist thinking and feminist research centres provided much to reflect on, particularly in the questioning of paradigms about the role of women in development models.

> "The feminist movements of the sixties (in developed countries) needed to understand and explain the subordinated condition of women. The first militants rapidly diagnosed that in the social and human disciplines up to that time, information on this subordination was lacking; that the theoretical bodies either did not deal with the inequality between men and women or justified it; that there was no history that demonstrated the genesis and development of the domination of men over women." (Barbieri, 1993)

Gender as an analytic category

Academic feminists needed an analytic category to explain the persistent inequality between men and women and so they created the category of gender. In the now classic definition by Joan Scott, gender is a constituent element of social relations based on the differences that distinguish the sexes and a primary form of meaningful relationships of power. Scott's definition comes from an analysis of different currents and aspects of feminist theoretical thinking and aims to define the concept of gender as an analytical category.

As a constituent of social relations, gender has four interrelated elements:

- *Culturally available symbols.* In the Western Christian tradition, Eve and Mary are examples of these. It is always

necessary to make clear how these symbolic representations gain influence, and in what context.

- *The normative concepts that interpret the meaning of these symbols*. Religious, educational, scientific, legal and political doctrines express normative meanings for men and women, defining the masculine and the feminine.
- *Social institutions and organizations*. Gender is built through family relationships, but not exclusively: the economy, the sex-segregated labour market, education and politics all help in its construction.
- *Subjective identities*.

These elements do not operate in an isolated fashion, nor is any single one a reflection of the other. From fieldwork research with women, interesting perspectives have emerged about how the elements combine and relate with each other. Indeed, the model proposed by Scott to analyse the processes of gender construction could be used to discuss class, race, ethnicity or any social process. The identity of gender is a constant intersecting of variables: one is man or woman, in a given society, and at the same time one can be young, indigenous and poor.

The second fundamental aspect in Scott's definition of gender is that which refers to the relationships of power:

> "It could be said that gender is the primary field in which or through which power is articulated. Gender is not the only field, but it seems to have been a persistent and recurring way to facilitate the meaning of power. Established as an objective conjunction of references, the concepts of gender structure the perception and organization, both concrete and symbolic, of all social life. These references establish distributions of power (differentiated control over material and symbolic resources,

and access to them), gender is implicated in the conception and construction of power itself." (Scott, 1990)

Scott's definition and later theoretical works have opened a very rich seam of conceptualization about gender and a great amount of creativity, while diversity and divergence can currently be seen in the production of theory.

Difficulties in the use of the term "gender"

The inclusion of the concept of gender in international conferences and in the mandates of co-operation agencies, primarily the result of the rich and varied conferences of women's movements, has brought greater visibility to issues concerning dominance and subordination in the relationships between man and woman. Nevertheless, the widespread use of the term "gender" is contributing to its popularization and simplification. Often, in talking about gender, one thinks about women and not about the social relationships of gender. This is also true in Latin America, where academic theoretical thinking has still not incorporated this complex dimension of gender in its categories of analysis largely because there is insufficient knowledge to define the issue. Here, though, academic women are – not without difficulty – making efforts to find space for research and systematic analysis on this subject.

The gender perspective is of special importance when carrying out analysis, systematization and theorization of experiences of women's organizations and their education projects. However, in trying to institutionalize them we have to be aware of a wide range of goals, from the desire for equality to the resolution of women's most pressing needs. There is a real risk of attributing a "gender perspective" to the specific consideration of the need to develop programmes with women, or even to put the old conceptualization

of women in development into this new clothing. According to Jeanine Anderson, gender is an ever more mobile target and the very concept has become more complex. The need to examine theoretical aspects in greater depth becomes greater as their use becomes generalized, and states and governments begin to talk about the gender perspective in public policies. In the Fourth UN Conference on Women, it was accepted as official language that "gender is differentiated from sex to express that the role and condition of men and women respond to a social construction and are subject to change". The gender perspective is thus a disputed territory, which means that actors and protagonists will be projecting dreams and utopias in the act of constructing new social relations:

> "Political processes will determine what results prevail in the sense that different actors and different meanings fight among themselves to attain power. The nature of this process, of the actors and their acts, can only be determined specifically in the context of time and space." (Scott, 1990)

Social movements and NGOs in Latin America

Latin America is the region with the worst distribution of income, where the concentration of wealth and social polarization are increasing. Democratization with "structural adjustments" is exacerbating the process of structural marginalization. According to Elizabeth Jelin:

> "...in Latin American societies, collective protests and local movements of two decades ago have become institutionalized, becoming more formal organizations that make up a Third Sector, different from the state and the market. Structurally these organizations are mediators between the state and the

> demands of the masses; between international movements and organizations and local needs; between international co-operation and the final recipients of aid. The national NGOs and their international links are becoming a new actor in the social scene. Their work is becoming ever more important at times when the predominance of neo-liberal policies is increasingly limiting state action on social policies." (Jelin 1996)

This is a difficult context for NGOs since they are often deemed to be compensatory structures for what the state does not provide yet are not able to help the processes of democratization. Furthermore, the fragmentation of NGO actions and the micro level of their interventions weaken their capacity to influence society. In general, the actions of NGOs are determined by international co-operation, which implies a certain degree of dependence with respect to resources and how to use them, but also the possibility of in-depth theoretical work and research.

In the case of women's organizations we must note that the presence of feminists in agencies of international co-operation has contributed to efforts to systematize and revise co-operation criteria, and the work of NOVIB and the Women's Network in redefining the criteria of "women in development" and conceptualizing "gender in development" stands out. The gender perspective in development aims to eliminate the conditions that allow the reproduction of relations of subordination. "This proposal, rather than presenting services that facilitate the fulfilment of traditional roles by women, is more concerned with promoting a radical change in the sexual division of labour" (Portocarrero and Vargas, 1994).

Both visions coexist in time and space and today, with ever more programmes for women, there are opportunities to examine other critical aspects of Latin American reality, or the theory behind

the work that aims to generate conditions of autonomy for women as collective subjects and protagonists of everyday social life.

NGOs, according to Jeanine Anderson (1996), work in favour of development without exercising much power over its course. They change systems because one of their main talents is their capacity to create bridges between different institutions. They produce, process and apply information, as universities and research centres could do, but they are primarily users of pragmatic information and quite restricted to specific problems. They are experimenters and idealists, in spite of their almost total financial dependence. For these and other reasons, NGOs are called upon to play an essential role in the "gender revolution".

The debate on gender itself has generated opportunities for women to build bridges between very diverse realities. This is essential if women's organizations, seen as an emerging social movement, are to stand the test of time and reach their full potential as collective actors who want to affirm their identity and to give it new cultural and symbolic content.

The educational dimension in the processes of women's NGOs

> "Adults have very rich individual and collective skills and experiences. Their potential must be recognized. Adults must be given a voice, the opportunity and the space to build on their experiences, so that they can thus grow both intellectually and effectively and develop their community." (First draft of the Action Plan for the Future of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education)

In the seventies, the feminist resurgence in Europe and the United States built a political agenda from self-awareness: "the personal is political" was the slogan that was taken up in the streets and in institutions. This movement not only wanted more laws that would

guarantee equality but also questioned the entire system and did this by reclaiming the history and silenced voices of women. The small group or collective was the sphere where all the vital experience of women became material which could be examined and questioned in the search for new alternatives. The revaluation of daily life, sexuality, norms, maternity and abortion all emerged as challenges to masculine perceptions. New subjectivity and new demands opened the way for history's most radical cultural revolution.

The creation of spaces for women where the vital experience of each individual is important has been one of the great contributions of feminism. Women's organizations, even those that do not define themselves as feminist, acknowledge the importance of this concept by using personal life experiences as a main pedagogical resource. In women's organizations one talks about pleasure and fear, violence and orgasm, as well as the rising cost of living or job losses. In Latin America, feminist organizations have had an important influence on the women's movement and their actions have been fundamental for the inclusion on the political agenda of themes regarded until very recently as private, such as domestic violence. This has given women the possibility of thinking about their reality as a field that can be modified.

In the book *Para nacer de nuevo – una experiencia de educación popular*, Ana Fernández, Cecilia Loría and Malú Valenzuela describe their work as educators of the lower classes:

> "It means moving forward and evolving, realizing that asking about what women's groups are in the impoverished masses also means asking about one's own situation, as women, as part of the teaching team; responses will arise and complement each other from both sides, but this does not happen as a simple process. Getting away from an initial conceptualization of the students as 'housewives', from the cosy style that sees them in an easy, peaceful and insubstantial world with its protective

monotony, being able to reconstruct the complex net where the multiple contradictions of daily life are interwoven, and examining this business of being a woman, the authors had to make a long journey, at the end of which they discovered themselves as, and became, feminists... amidst the amazement, doubt and even guilt that are generated by the search for a lost identity... or one that is socially hidden." (Fernández et al., 1991)

Three main points arise from this:

- The education process is not neutral and unties knots that involve the gender identities of both students and teachers.
- It is important to be clear about the concepts one is using in training, in particular in institutional development.
- Every educational proposal presupposes a fluid and systematic relation between theory and practice and this general principle is even more imperative in those areas where knowledge is still insufficient and uncertain.

With what theoretical parameters do we analyse daily life? How can we undo the symbolic universes that construct inequality? How do we value local traditions? Is there a need to construct a feminine system of values in each specific situation? When they talk about guilt, are the authors referring to an uncertainty, to a fear of starting contradictory and painful processes for the women involved?

The ending of subordination is not a subject to be taught, it is a process that evolves when women take over their own space and their lives, a personal and collective growth full of doubts and uncertainties. As Donny Meertens (n.d.) puts it so well:

"...the conflicts and breaks inherent in the processes of change are not always expressed explicitly as conflicts of gender

> crystallized around the confrontation between men and women (as when he forbids her from going to a meeting at night). They also appear as conflicts with both male and female representatives of the old order in social institutions (the family, the church, the workplace) and even within the women themselves."

These aspects are a factor in the planning of educational processes in the widest sense of the term. The conflict forms part of the process, since women are not a homogeneous category and express particular values, knowledge and interests.

Autonomy as a process

> "...an educational process is innovative only if it alters the sense of traditional experience, with meaningful contributions in the areas of participation and social solidarity, cultural recovery, the integration of education and work, and the autonomy and creativity of the actors." (Graciela Messina, 1996)

Autonomy is one of the concepts most studied by feminist theorists; it is a concept subject to constant revision and debate, as a result of the practice and politics of the women's movement:

> "The concept of autonomy refers to the existence of a multiplicity of social subjects and agents, demanding their own space, their own voice in the society and exerting pressure to satisfy their particular demands. Autonomy is the concept that better than any other appears to refer to the recognition of diversity, differences, plurality." (Meynes and Vargas, 1991)

Meynes and Vargas (1991) set out to define the following dimensions of autonomy in a document originally published by the

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs: physical autonomy, which implies control over one's own sexuality and fertility; economic autonomy, based on equal access and control over the means of production; political autonomy, the exercise of basic political rights and the self-determination to create organizations; and socio-cultural autonomy, which refers to the capacity to affirm one's own identity and self-esteem. The processes of women's autonomy in each of these dimensions are complex and conflictual, take place in situations that are often without much hope and without real alternatives, and are subjected to external hierarchies and norms.

In the formulation of the projects presented in the seminar in Melgar, these dimensions of the processes of autonomy were expressed in different ways, but in almost all, autonomy is the central axis, as illustrated in this volume by CESDER of Mexico:

> "This was the need from which the programme originated: to strengthen women's leadership in achieving self-empowerment and autonomy...in order that the participants know and have the tools to defend their rights, both productive and reproductive, and as citizens in general, which will help them to draw up political proposals to ensure more equal relations in their families, communities and municipalities."

Autonomy is exercised, not at the end of a race but during it, each step, each interaction, each negotiation, each alliance with others, presupposes putting at stake one's own autonomy as an individual and collective subject. The construction of equal relations in the family presupposes that each individual woman renegotiates her place in the family, wins and loses, and presupposes changes and the predisposition to change. Gender roles are constantly being modified even when hierarchical relations remain substantially unchanged, and this means that the processes of autonomy are not lineal, but have ebbs and flows, contradictions and reverses.

Meertens, in *Autonomía y práctica social* (n.d.), indicates various dilemmas that arise during the processes of construction of women's autonomy: the need for one's own space and the dangers of marginalization or exclusion, ambiguity towards the power and the conflict, improvement of the standard of living versus change in the relations of subordination, the undervaluing of women's community work versus professionalism, and transformations in the domestic sphere versus taking part in broader political action. For every one of these dilemmas there are multiple responses, though each is built on a bank of experiences gathered in the history of the women's movement in the search for affirmation of women's citizenship, in a domain where rights are exercised and desires expressed within a complex framework of social relations. Some of these dilemmas were put forward as discussion topics at the Melgar seminar, and therefore it might be interesting to consider them further.

Need for one's own space

There are two sides in any debate on this proposal. On the one hand it is still resisted, with many institutions and NGOs rejecting the need to create a specific environment for women. Even when it is carried out its aim can be to reinforce traditional roles or to use the women as an "available" and pliable resource to occupy vacuums in social politics. On the other hand, for institutions that have developed work with women over a period of time, the need to find a differentiated and, in a certain sense, closed space where reassessment of life can take place is not only a pedagogical resource but a necessity to get the educational process moving. The dangers of creating a comfortable, complacent and safe space that does not interact with any other and therefore limits the process of autonomy are part of the very process.

It is therefore interesting to observe in many of the projects presented, the search for interaction with other spheres and the explicit goal of influencing the overall processes of the community and society. Several projects noted their active involvement in health programmes or the public education system for the prevention of domestic violence, or in citizenship training programmes with the idea of increasing women's electoral participation. Seen from a more global perspective, we could say that the women's movement in Latin America is leaving its own circle in order to influence and make an impact on society; many projects are directing their efforts towards strengthening local initiatives so that they can act as intermediaries in national political and social processes.

Improving the standard of living or changing the relations of subordination

This is one of the most strongly debated issues in Latin America, where the concepts still prevailing in many co-operation agencies and NGOs are those described above under "Women in development". Most women's NGOs have developed these ideas further in relation to the practical and strategic needs of gender and have begun to analyse women's interests.

While it is true that the socialization of gender establishes the domestic environment as women's responsibility from the outset, and that family survival has led women to play other parts in the community and the workplace, we must also analyse the structures of inequality of class and gender and how these are reproduced symbolically, beyond what people really do. From the point of view of autonomy as a strategic aim, improving the standard of living and having the freedom (always relative) to generate one's own project, are not two separate entities, but two halves of the whole process of self-affirmation and construction of the collective subject.

For the educational process, the control of certain instrumental resources that permit the generation of income should not stand in opposition to the creation of instruments of individual and collective growth which, if we agree with the most humanist and comprehensive definitions of education, allow control over one's own life. The World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in 1990, confirmed the need to make basic education a universal priority. Basic education is understood as an education that is able to satisfy basic learning needs, consisting of both theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that, in each case, are indispensable for people to survive, fully develop their capacities, work with dignity, participate in their country, improve their quality of life, take decisions and keep on learning. In the book by Fernández et al. already quoted, the authors explain how:

> "...we began to understand that the 'housework' of women is not reduced to the four walls of the home, but that when they do domestic work women establish multiple social relations that enter the public realm... that in this daily life the relations of power exercised over them are revealed, from the ruling party, the bureaucrats, and in general, all those institutions linked with the tasks they perform, the teachers, doctors and public servants whom they encounter daily." (Fernández et al., 1991)

The educational process presupposes decoding the network of relations and/or subordinations that rule social life: what is done, how it is done, who does it, who benefits, and the origin of the formal and informal norms that govern these exchanges in the different spheres and structures, family, community and society.

Ethnic identities – gender identities

Respect for the traditional values of ethnic cultures and respect for diversity is an achievement in so far as it recognizes the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic reality of our hemisphere, but it often becomes a pretext for not examining gender relations. Carmen Ruíz asks herself what it is that makes development agencies think that changing the items produced by a community will affect the traditional culture any less than promoting equality between men and women. Several projects presented at the seminar in Melgar refer to strengthening the presence of women in the communities:

> "...re-evaluate ethnic and gender identities to disseminate the existence of a new social actor in the region: the Aymara woman. We consider the peasant woman a subject within the family unit, sensitive to communal problems, whose dynamic and effective presence in community development favours a recognition and self-appreciation of her capacities and potentialities." (C-CIMCA)

Questions such as these, which are presented for discussion, assist in the analysis of the projects presented in the seminar and express the need for theoretical in-depth study on the specific crossover of gender and ethnicity. Some of the projects, such as that of CEPROMU, for example, aim to answer these questions through processes of self-diagnosis to identify the main issues of class, gender and ethnicity.

Without a doubt, this is a difficult and highly complex field since it is impossible to separate the idea of local development from macro-social processes. It would be useful, however, to recover "the knowledge of the system's internal dynamics, its structural and micro-social determinants" (Spinoza). Once again, the variables of who does it, how they do it, and who takes the decisions can not

only help women to pinpoint the contribution they make at both family and community levels, but can also establish the links with the organization of the entire productive system.

Theoretical knowledge is, as we have stated, currently being defined and enriched, and the consideration of new challenges by women from the most diverse backgrounds, will contribute to gender becoming an analytic category that does more than just mark out a simple plan of human diversity and its multiple interactions.

A pedagogy of gender?

As Rosa María Torres says, adult education in Latin America has been the Cinderella of education policies:

> "Conceived as an education of and for the poor, as a second class, remedial, compensatory education..., adult education has developed in conditions of great institutional, financial, human and technical precariousness. Entire programmes that disappear from one day to the next... Discontinuity in policies, squalid budgets, structural instability, volunteer workers or badly paid and poorly trained workers, whose training is basically learned on the job. A field of work with little theoretical development and with low academic status, lack of research and evaluation. In short, precariousness and vulnerability all around. " (Torres, 1995)

Even in this framework, many institutions of non-formal education do attempt to achieve the visibility and autonomy to be social actors. Literacy, or the achievement of certain skills, is almost always part of a utopian hope of gaining other cultural, social and ethical benefits. Yet respect for diversity, the recovery of popular knowledge, and the education process understood as a collective enterprise in which the educator (male or female) is a facilitator of

the collective group process, are generally accepted principles among the institutions involved in popular education.

As we have argued, however, the gender perspective presupposes theoretical and intellectual work at the level of the educational institute to direct the teaching-learning process, seeking to decode hidden or inherent discrimination in gender relations. This approach, taken as an objective by most of the non-governmental organizations that work with women, has not yet permeated all those institutions that carry out informal education activities. This, therefore, is perhaps one of the most important challenges to progress, namely to revise the hidden agenda of NGOs with their stereotypes and supposedly neutral educational practices, uses of language, images and codes.

The gender perspective is a conceptual approach to interpreting reality but, like any analytic category, it grows, becoming more complex and problematic in confronting that reality. Practical work with women in Latin America continues to demonstrate interesting new approaches that need to be explored further. However, these advances are only small currents in the oceans of thought on education. The incorporation of the gender perspective in the informal education of adults means exploring cultural and ideological resistance in the institutions, creating opportunities for debate to analyse educational practices, and establishing a fluid and permanent bridge between academic thinking on "gender studies" and the institutions that carry out these activities.

Hence, it would seem more appropriate to speak of the gender perspective as a transverse approach, which is enriched by and in dialogue with other approaches that also understand that:

> "Education has an element of utopia, of an unrealized future, that gives us the opportunity to bring about the freedom of all persons in the expression of their feelings and ideas, the possibility to choose and make decisions and decide in favour

of fuller life styles with courage and also with responsibility." (Bonder, 1996)

For women, this possible future is their own life, their personal and emotional relations, the exercise of their rights as citizens, the legitimization of their dreams and aspirations, control over their own body and time – and this is something that all women have to learn.

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Chapter 2

Gender and Innovation

Graciela Messina

Introduction

The women's projects presented in Melgar acknowledge that there are still great inequalities between women and men even though these may differ from past inequalities and, in some countries, may be more subtle and disguised. From the moment they decide to destroy these inequalities, the women's projects join in a common cause: to enable and empower women in all fields of personal and social life. Empowerment and autonomy are concepts used to organize and give meaning to the practical side of these projects. However, the starting point is the acceptance of the need to strengthen women's organizations so that they may gain access to public life, relate to the state and civil society and participate as equals in the making of public policies. Furthermore, as public policies intersect with our private lives, they need to take account of the fact that women are moving from the private sphere to the public sphere. Consequently, education programmes for women have to go beyond training for specific tasks or making women visible at a social level. Their mission is to contribute to women being regarded as social subjects and to women leaders being part of the process of creating a democratic citizenry.

How then, do non-formal education programmes for women contribute to adult education as a whole? According to the participants at the seminar, they present the political reality while showing

how the culture of inequality can be transformed. Nevertheless, these same people also believe that gender differences must be taken into account by and for society as a whole, not only for women, and particularly in the field of education.

The women's projects presented at Melgar have the common political aim of changing gender inequality. Although there are differences between the projects in this respect, these reflect the different needs of the women participating in them, rather than conceptual divergence. The participants stated that gender-related education theory is in fact created and thought up by marginal, small-scale, non-formal education programmes for women rather than by the state or international organizations. As one said: "It is we marginal women who create it."

Using the same line of reasoning, participants expressed the view that both educational policies with a gender approach and educational policies for women are lacking. They also believe that communication is the key educational strategy that is needed in order to break the social silence surrounding women. In these programmes there is a construction process going on that starts from popular education, confronts local knowledge with external knowledge, assumes development to be flexible, acknowledges specific needs, recognizes the learning value of groups and collective work, and links individual histories to social life. This educational process involves creating methodologies and materials specifically designed for working with women and providing opportunities for dialogue with others.

Participants acknowledged that there are unfinished aspects of their work: firstly, there is the need for deeper reflection on educational practice and learning processes; secondly, they have to overcome the predominance of a masculine logic and, thirdly, there has to be an easing of the constant tension between collective construction and socially acknowledged needs, whether those of the women themselves or those imposed by agencies.

All the participants agreed that education and gender cannot be separated from each other and that this principle applies to all education, both for men and women. They were also of the opinion that a gender approach involves a construction process based on practice and that theories and methodologies originating in adult or popular education which make assumptions about gender must not be imposed. In addition, the participants stressed that it is essential to consider the individual in the process of building the collective. The programmes can be seen to include both an educational practice and an educational theory based on practice and are motivated by the desire to contribute to a process which has the dual intention of turning women into social subjects and of breaking down gender inequality.

In general, women's movements and non-formal education programmes for women have not been included in the education reforms for the region or in national debates on educational issues. Consequently, we should be asking whether governments have created conditions for this participation. It is also necessary to reflect more deeply on education programmes for women and this involves the involvement of other fields of education, maybe even the construction of a gender pedagogy. Education programmes "for women" and education programmes with a gender perspective for both women and men are two fields that should be explored and evaluated. There appears to be a need for intergenerational and co-operative work to release us from the victim-beneficiary positions we have renounced. These are, without doubt, medium-term tasks.

Innovation in education

Conceptions regarding innovation in education will be modified if a gender approach is adopted. In short, gender pedagogy warns us neither to generalize in the field of education nor to ignore domination. However, non-formal education programmes for women are

contributing to a theory of innovation in education, the perception of which depends on the knowledge and influences on which it is based.

From my education work, I feel innovation is still a word that has meaning for people. On the assumption that innovation occurs in a social, intellectual or influential field that makes it meaningful, I have travelled the path from theory to practice and back and this has enabled me to recognize the environment in which it unfolds. Rather than defining innovation, I prefer to think in terms of a realm of diversity, of specific, multiple and irreducible innovations.

Whenever one refers to innovation, though, the relation between innovative education programmes and the systematization of pedagogical practices is always raised. Whereas innovation can be seen as the sphere of what is new, systematization stands as a way for research to be done with and by the agents themselves, i.e. as a way of building knowledge in a place other than that of the specialist, among the collectives of educators and learners.

The word "innovation" describes an endogenous or self-generated change. The category "innovation", however, comes from the administrative sciences and was introduced into the field of education in the sixties. This linguistic loan was part of the boom in developmentalism. Since then, innovation and modernization have remained linked. It is as if innovation were inherent to modernity and as if innovation guaranteed modernization processes. Moreover, it is as if innovation guaranteed democratization within education.

If education implies rebirth, then innovation is the path that makes rebirth possible and at the same time enables us to look back to the origins. Since the sixties, however, innovation in education has come to be regarded as an expert-defined external process. The classical definition of innovation recognizes its external nature and the texts that founded a tradition on this theme, such as those of Huberman (1973) and Havelock and Huberman (1980) stress innovation's "adoption and generalization" procedures. Innovation

is considered as if it were an object, something that can be gestated from without (imported innovation rather than self-generated). There has thus been an interest in generating procedures for adoption, transference and generalization, criteria and agents linking the original context with the new field in which the innovation is to be implemented.

Another theme that appears in the available literature is concern about the speed with which innovations are dropped or whether they are even taken up. In the case of education, for example, innovations tend to be adopted more slowly. The categories used for examining this correspond to those typically used in classical sociology: innovation is given the status of an object or phenomenon, subject to observable and measurable changes.

Interest in innovation entered the education system via those in charge of planning, who took over the notion from the administrative sciences, the systems approach and applied science. According to the classical scientific method, innovation is defined as a planned and systematic programme for change (scientific knowledge, as defined by classical science, is systematic). To innovate is linked to modifying a school's or non-formal education programme's organizational culture and adding value to its structures, processes, procedures and products.

For some educators, innovation in education is a process that provides more and better inputs and/or produces observable and measurable changes in teaching processes that result in higher efficiency. For others, it alters the sense of the practice of education (Martinic, 1988). Innovation in education has become increasingly associated with quality and international competitiveness (CEPAL/ UNESCO, 1994; Aguerrondo, 1991, Casassus and Filip, 1992). In education, as in other areas of science and technology, information is the most highly valued factor added through innovation.

However, even classical authors, such as Havelock and Huberman, understand that the most efficient innovations in

education are local, emerge from the grassroots, develop with the participation of the users themselves and respect the manifestations of each culture. With this background, it is necessary to create an alternative reference framework for innovation in education, independent of the systems approach and of the administrative sciences, which responds to the specific requirements of the education process, including the particular nature of its management.

The first question is thus: Where does innovation come from? This question, though, encompasses several others: To what extent does the concept of innovation held by those wishing to produce an innovation condition its design, implementation and evaluation? What are the social, cultural and political dimensions of innovation, and how and to what extent do they determine it? To what extent is an innovation produced together with those involved and based on their interests and needs? Is it a new imposition?

The second question is: What is innovation in education for? To guarantee higher international competitiveness? To increase the elite's social and educational opportunities and exclude the majority? To achieve an abstract level of quality in education that hides persistent inequality? To create a culture of peace and an education for peace, well-being, social justice and happiness for all, at least as a goal?

Some of the principles that can contribute to the creation of a reference framework for innovation, a task that must necessarily be collective, are outlined as follows:

- Whether or not an education-related event, experience, product or programme is to be identified as an "innovation" depends on the observer's point of view and field of knowledge. The idea of innovation in education as a process that is open to innumerable configurations is thus reinforced. Although school itself was originally an "innovation", it is now considered a tradition. If popular education is used as a point of

reference, an educational experience will only be considered innovative if it changes the meaning of traditional educational practice and contributes to social participation and solidarity, cultural revival, the integration of work and education, and the autonomy and creativity of those involved (the actors).

- Innovation in education is, in itself, a process of cultural creation since it generates a new system of values, beliefs, rules and regulations, technologies, attitudes and forms of behaviour. The previous state is transformed even though the actors may not perceive the totality of this movement or its holistic nature.

- Adult education is seen to favour both innovation and the preservation of debased, low-quality and inefficient practices. It has been both an educational laboratory, a way to draw education nearer to communities, allowing us to prove the political character of education-related actions, and a home for vain social efforts. This contradictory condition is explained by its function as "a different education" since the school was its original reference point and it was focused on adults belonging to social sectors excluded from regular education.

- In the field of adult education, innovation has pursued the non-formal method of proceeding. Primary or basic education for adults was late in assimilating the principles of popular education and even then it has done so only incipiently.

- Innovation implies progression rather than a break from the previous stage. New things emerge from their own background, even though they may deny it, which means that it is possible to generate knowledge from fragmentary realities that may nevertheless be articulated through collective practice.

Innovation also implies cultural autonomy (self-generated innovation rather than innovation adopted from developed countries and modified). This continuity between tradition and innovation also means that there can be continuity or a breach between innovation and its institutionalization.

- Innovation in education mainly consists of "programmes in movement", aspects which stand out in a process that flows with a certain continuity and indetermination. This dynamic condition is created by the following categories: structure, process and function. Within each programme the interrelating systems, their future and the impact of each aspect on the other aspects and on the whole can be observed simultaneously. On the other hand, the concept of "habitus" is very fruitful for understanding the links between the programmes, the rules of the game or the practical meaning associated to each one of them and the specific context.

- According to Casassus and Filip (1992), who take up ideas from Habermas and Flores, whose final reference is Heidegger, innovation is a "promise". An innovative programme can be conceived as an exchange of promises or commitments to act between participants in response to a breach in the current order. In this context we may ask: What kind of breaches led to innovations in education? At what level of the system did the breach take place? What problems became visible? What role did the different actors play within and outside the education system in identifying the breach and the problems? What kind of promises can be deduced from understanding and confronting the breaches? Who takes charge of the promise? Which actors are part of the promise? (Casassus and Filip, 1992). Innovation as a promise includes two dimensions, the opportunity of something different and the

possibility of an unfulfilled promise, a dimension that seems to be part of all promises.

- Innovation, modernity and modernization are closely linked. In the first place, innovation implies a breach with the established order – even an explicit breach in the case of a conscious innovation. Out of this process comes a commitment to "something else", to an alternative that has not yet been finalized but that is being considered. Secondly, since innovation disturbs traditional patterns, it is currently associated with modernization. Modernization itself takes place through innovation and provides the link between innovation and modernity. It endows innovation with the halo of fashion, making it as alluring as a mirage. Innovation becomes a way of being of modernity itself with its compulsive search for change, as expressed for example by the compulsion in industrial societies to change cars every two years or by knocking down buildings in good shape in large cities such as New York (Vattimo, 1989). This trend is expressed in our everyday life by the policy of encouraging luxury or at least trivial consumption, even among low-income groups, thus creating the "illusion" that they belong, that they are part of the other sector.

However, when we face a denied tradition that has itself denied its previous roots, innovation may imply looking back to the origins. María Quintero (in the paper she presented at the UNESCO/OREALC Workshop in Santiago in January, 1992) described this possibility of non-alienated innovation by making reference to a bilingual literacy programme in Ecuador and to a proposal to rescue the culture and language of native cultures as opposed to the approach of the traditional *mestizo* school.

It is interesting to note that innovations involve both possibilities and dangers. The word innovation itself opens up another world for

us, a world of creation and autonomy. Innovation both permits and emerges from collective activity, from the strength of groups and social movements, from intercultural dialogue, loans and exchanges. But the dangers are many. We are leaving behind innovations trapped in old patterns, which repeat history in a new guise. We are leaving behind formal innovations that preserve the meaning of power and power games which enable power to be perpetuated (the idea being to innovate so that everything remains the same); and we are leaving behind innovations that attend to infrastructural aspects but neglect the human aspect and start from within the existing administration instead of turning innovation into a constructive act that can create its own background. We may feel obliged to innovate because of some external force or feel threatened by an innovation that makes us abandon our security zone.

Lastly, innovation creates identities. Some of the questions that occur repeatedly throughout the literature are: What identity does this innovation promote? Who does it benefit? To what extent are the actors aware?

Lessons learnt from programmes with grassroots women

To work with women from popular sectors in societies that discriminate against women with varying degrees of subtlety is an innovation in itself. One advances even further down the innovation road when these programmes take on a gender perspective. These two assumptions guide the analysis of innovative education programmes for, with and by women.

The first conclusion is that there is a wide diversity of programmes geared towards grassroots women in Latin America and that they are under the constant threat of fragmentation because of a diversity of objectives, target populations, institutional dependence and methodologies. These are programmes that affect a small number of women and/or lack continuity, and on which there is not

enough information. This in turn relates to the fact that the actions taken by programmes for women are not systematized. Although surveys of women's programmes have been made in some countries (in 1991, for example, the CEM made a survey of women's programmes in the metropolitan area in Chile), in general one of the main problems is fragmentation and the difficulty of identifying which women's programmes co-exist within the same country.

On the other hand, in spite of the great progress made in the last two decades, grassroots women are not a priority on the region's political agenda. Institutions promoting women have been created in most of the countries in the region. Socially speaking, the gender debate has become more visible, the number of programmes addressing grassroots women has grown and an increasing interest in groups for women in a critical situation, such as women who are heads of families, can be seen in some countries. Nevertheless, grassroots women's education, whether formal or non-formal, is not a top priority in public policies. In fact, whereas the new generations, children and youth, are the priority populations in formal education policies where the aim is to make regular education at a basic and secondary level universal, the gender theme is included only as a transversal theme. The focus of non-formal education is vocational training and particularly job training programmes for low-income youth aimed at improving their chances of gaining employment.

Non-formal education programmes that work "with" women without any specific attention to them, and non-formal education programmes "for" women, those exclusively devoted to the female population, tend to be identified with each other. In the latter group, it is necessary to make a distinction between programmes that include a gender dimension and those that do not. According to Ruíz (1994), the more successful programmes for women are those that consider a subjective component associated with women's self-esteem and self-assertion, i.e. a gender dimension.

The same author warns us that many programmes did not originally include a gender approach, but that practice itself made them adopt it in the process. The gender dimension thus appears as part of the work in women's programmes. Work in specific dimensions (nutrition, childcare and others) inevitably leads to an inquiry into women's condition in the world.

The programmes that do not include a gender dimension intend "to improve women's condition without altering their position" (Ruíz, 1994:24). This group includes programmes addressing the mother's role (child nutrition), appealing to women's productive role (income-generating workshops) and/or recognizing their role in community organization (community health projects, popular cafeterias, etc.). All these programmes aim at reducing poverty and/or promoting community organization through improving women's condition. Women are thus seen as a vehicle, "a gateway towards other populations" (Ruíz, 1994:24). However, these programmes involve an additional task or burden for women without questioning the many issues that affect them.

On the other hand, programmes that include a gender dimension integrate meeting specific needs with questioning a sexist division of labour while reflecting on the forms of discrimination that accompany it and the extent to which social actors should be engaged in overcoming it. These programmes acknowledge women's own needs and aim at developing the capacities they actually have but do not recognize.

If we focus on programmes "for" women, regardless of the inclusion of the gender dimension, the increasing tendency to integrate objectives and fields of work is the factor that unifies all this diversity. In fact, they themselves respond to economic needs or to the need for services in general as well as to educational needs. Literacy programmes, for instance, are accompanied by other activities enabling women to increase their income (Ruiz, 1994). Some employment training programmes are defined as

comprehensive and include childcare, health services, housing and legal advice, among other things (Messina et al., 1993). In other cases, programmes include training for employment and productive workshop management and/or organization with a management component (Ruíz, 1994; Messina et al., 1993).

The organizational idea that women's programmes share is the creation of a space and time of their own to liberate women from some of their habitual tasks. This, together with the integration of lines of action, is one of their most important innovations. These programmes therefore focus more on transforming women's awareness of being women – greater autonomy, greater respect within the family framework, awareness of their role as workers and the value of their work (both productive and reproductive) – rather than on increasing opportunities in formal employment or on improving their income.

Among people and organizations working with women, there is a consensus about two strategies that contribute towards the success of these programmes:

- institutionalizing the gender approach by including it in programmes for women, with women and for the population in general;
- generating a research culture in the programmes that involves making participatory diagnoses before implementing the programmes, systematizing experience as a permanent accompaniment to implementation, making external evaluations, participating in exchange networks and making a commitment to keeping information transparent.

Institutionalizing a gender approach involves legitimizing it and giving it continuity by making it part of the culture of education programmes. This requires a public debate on the theme as well as the inclusion of the gender dimension as a legitimate and

irrevocable dimension of women's programmes. Recalling Ruiz's comment (1994) on the fact that the gender dimension was added to most programmes in the process of their development, it could be stated that a gender approach appears as a result of recurrent practices in women's programmes. These practices enable them to go from a specific theme to considering their own condition (or to go from looking at an explanation to the structure of the explanation in a metaknowledge process). Institutionalization cannot free itself from individual initiatives. It is necessary to institutionalize the gender approach by giving it a form and a sense within the programme and by centring it in operational activities. Institutionalizing the gender approach requires the organizations' willingness to do so: their accepting the value of permanently including the debate about women's own condition. The main obstacles to the application of a gender approach are the environment (the conditions under which programmes work), programmes' lack of continuity, and an instrumental logic that evaluates programmes according to their observable results, measurable in technical skills rather than in accordance with affective, cognitive and ethical processes and learning. Furthermore, institutionalizing the gender approach involves including the programmes' outward work by creating a continuity in the relationships between women's programmes, non-formal education and adult education in particular.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the gender dimension is not "something to do with women only": it could be included in programmes for adults, both men and women, or in programmes devoted exclusively to men or in children's or teenagers' programmes for both sexes. Should this become general practice, the assumption is that levels of family and public violence could drop considerably.

Innovation in programmes for, by and with women

How is innovation represented in programmes involving women? Ignoring women's condition as actual beings, as culturally constructed beings, and including a "women's" component in the programmes are two options that are widely taken up in programmes in which women participate as part of a population that is not gender-defined (programmes "with" women – for example, women participating in vocational training programmes for workers or in primary education for adults). In Chile, for example, women participate less in vocational training programmes. The purpose of the gender component created within the project *Chile Joven* was to change this situation and for women to discuss their cultural specificity. The gender component, however, may be regarded as a remedial activity or a mending patch rather than as a strategy for reflecting on women's condition in which both women and men are included.

The main innovations in programmes "for" women include creating opportunities that take account of everyday needs as a whole; debating with women their gender condition and strengthening self-esteem and autonomy; considering the way women live in the world; and creating projects that free time and space, usually in places close to their homes, so that they can obtain an education. Above all they are to do with women being in charge of social actions geared to others, activities that involve taking on new roles, or even habitual roles but in a form that calls for a culture of co-operation.

Above all else, though, education programmes for women touch a sore point and remind us that discrimination persists and that a gender approach and gender pedagogy are still pending at public policy level. Furthermore, these programmes remind us once again that neither education nor innovation exists in the abstract, but refers to specific groups and a gender condition that

cannot be ignored but has nevertheless been denied at a social level.

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Chapter 3

Towards a Pedagogy of Education Programmes for Grassroots Women

Miryan Zúñiga E.

Introduction

In Colombia, the term "pedagogy" has become a kind of joke, a word that can represent anything. During the administration of President Belisario Betancur (1983-1986), Colombians started to become acquainted with the use politicians made of this word: "a pedagogy for peace", "a pedagogy for living together", "a human rights pedagogy", "a pedagogy for democracy", "a pedagogy for the country's new political constitution", and so on. Its meaning, however, is unclear. For some, it is an act of efficient communication, for others, a process of building environments for learning. Yet others see it as an area dealing with teaching techniques and materials.

This essay considers pedagogy as a knowledge that, in the words of Olga Lucía Zuluaga, consists of:

> "...the broadest and most open realm of knowledge, it is a realm in which different discourses can be found: describing pedagogy as 'learning' underscores the mobility it gives the researcher to move from the most systematized areas to the most open areas that are in a process of continual interchange

with human sciences and other disciplines and practices" (Zuluaga, 1987).

The object of pedagogy, as a system of knowledge, is the integral transformation of human beings, the structure of their awareness, knowledge, practice and inclinations with which they relate to nature, others, society and themselves – a transformation geared towards changing these interrelations.

People's awareness is structured throughout the process of relating to their environment, to others and to themselves. It is thus self-constructed. It is not a structure that has existed beforehand, a genetically encoded structure. This structure is created in a personal, natural, social and cultural context. The shaping of the structure of awareness begins at birth itself, when the individual starts to create beliefs and develop knowledge, attitudes and inclinations that he/she keeps or transforms so long as they contribute to self-esteem, transcendence and social recognition. These transformations may be supported by pedagogical processes that either confront or reinforce the student's awareness structure.

Although pedagogy aims at the integral transformation of the human being, it does not exist in a void, but rather develops in the context of specific disciplines or issues. That is why we will make an attempt to record the development of pedagogy, in the context of women's issues, as a means of enabling women's liberation from their present condition through developing their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and practical activities in an increasingly autonomous way. It is nevertheless necessary to note that pedagogy is not always liberating. As Paulo Freire clearly states, there is also a "banking" pedagogy that sees students as vessels, recipients that educators must fill with information (Freire, 1971).

The context of education programmes with women

The following *Candombé* chant sung by black women in Uruguay beautifully expresses their context:

> *In my singing I now want to say what I feel,*
> *what I can achieve; I work in the morning,*
> *in the afternoon I take care of my home*
> *and when night falls,*
> *I candombé.*
>
> *That is why I want you to understand that I want equality*
> *and not to live a marginal life within society.*

This chant is an expression of social inferiority among a specific group of women. Although all women share this condition, it is expressed differently in each culture. Because of this condition women are a highly vulnerable population which is reflected in:

- little control over economic resources;
- a marginal position in the labour market (their work is socially invisible, it is basically housework that produces neither goods nor an income, although it does help the labour force indirectly):
- lower participation in political, economic and family level decision-making.

Some statistical data will show women's social condition worldwide:

- 70% of the 1,200 million people living in absolute poverty are women;

- 60% of the thousands of unemployed people looking for work are women;
- 60% of the 100 million children with no access to elementary school are girls;
- two thirds of the world's illiterate people are women;
- 75% of the 23 million refugees are women;
- the wages women receive are 40% lower than men's for the same work;
- women's working day is 25% longer than men's (UN 1995 data).

In Colombia:

- illiteracy is greater among women (5.3%) than among men (4.3%);
- women constitute 52% of the population, but only 42.6% of them are economically active;
- women's unemployment (13%) is greater than men's (7.3%);
- 30.4% of women in partnerships have suffered from physical violence from their partners;
- only 14.2% of persons in executive positions are women, and only 6.8% of congress members are women;
- 45% of the women in the minimum wage sector earned 40% less than men;
- around 1990, 29% of all children were living with their mothers without their biological fathers.

Patriarchal ideology rationalizes women's condition of inferiority, defined by Gabriela Castellanos as "the more or less generalized opinion that in general woman's behaviour (her roles, activities and control over resources), her interests and ideological status are not as valuable, important or significant as men's" (Castellanos, 1991), by the assumption that a woman's characteris-

tics are "inherent" to her biological "nature", the concept of sex. It has thus established a "femininity myth" as the pivot of its proposal based on women's reproductive functions. If by "myth" we understand the process through which certain recurrent arguments justifying group decisions and actions becomes natural, the femininity myth could be rationalized as follows: because of her natural biological condition, woman's primary function is to have children; her main social relations thus are woven around her family (husband and children). From these relations as mother and wife her "feminine nature" allows her to comfort, care, and mediate in the hierarchical relations between father and children, as well as help, understand and back up her husband in his everyday actions. A woman's life thus goes on almost exclusively in her home's enclosed and private atmosphere, whereas men's life takes place in the public sphere.

The following hypotheses have been set forth in regard to women's social inferiority (Castellanos, 1991):

- Women are physiologically predestined to be closer to nature, whereas men are closer to culture since they do things that transform nature.
- Throughout history wars have required more men (because of their physical strength and aggressiveness) than women, who have been relegated to a secondary social status.
- In the past, agricultural production, housework and childcare required stability. Women were kidnapped or purchased to perform these tasks and were thus dominated.

Nevertheless, it was women who discovered agriculture during humanity's early days; they initiated manual production in order to preserve seeds and agricultural products and they also learnt how to heal diseases. Once the production of knowledge became a separate and formal activity, it gradually turned into an activity

reserved for elite men. Erudite men thus elaborated morals and laws to their advantage, which were disseminated through the schools. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, under such laws strong and erudite women were considered witches, and persecuted and executed. Erudite and respectable men, such as Aristotle and Freud, helped to consolidate the notion of women as inferior. Aristotle considered men to be active and women to be passive. For him, women were mutilated men. For Freud, the normal human being was masculine. Women were deviants whose anatomy defined their destiny. Since the first professional doctors were men, they defined some women's functions, such as menstruation, as "diseases". The first professional psychologists were also men in charge of defining women's "psychological diseases" in relation to masculine psychology, which was considered normal. The first historians, also men, wrote history with male heroes and characters. The economists defined work as that which produces goods that have a price and can be exchanged in the market. Because women's work, confined to their home, did not meet these conditions, it could not be considered work. A housewife is thus thought to do nothing.

Under patriarchal ideology, knowledge has been far from fair to women. The masculine way of thinking established dichotomies in which the feminine aspect was considered inferior (see Table 1).

Education's role in reproducing this patriarchal ideology focused on "teaching meanings and values as well as knowledge that had been selected and organized in accordance with Colombian society's hegemonic male standards" (Zúñiga, 1981). Male hegemony in Colombia translates into greater participation by males in the school system (elementary school, secondary school and university). Female participation in the elementary and secondary levels, however, is growing. Girls are placed in "soft" school and university programmes that lead to "women's jobs" such as nursing, secretarial work, education, social work, psychol-

ogy and the humanities, fields of study that enjoy lower social prestige. And although most teachers are women, more men participate in teachers' union leadership.

Table 1. Patriarchal perceptions of knowledge

positive-masculine	negative-feminine
rationality	emotionality
culture	nature
mind	body
public sphere	private sphere

Finally, there is a hidden curriculum, a non-official education process that is not acknowledged by the teachers and that encourages one set of behaviour, attitudes and practices for girls and another one for boys. They receive different stimuli and punishments and play different games. School texts reproduce images of women and men that also transmit patriarchal ideology: most illustrations show women as housewives whereas men are shown at work in factories or as professionals creating culture and technology. Career counsellors advise girls to take a "soft", feminine career, whereas boys are advised to follow a strong, masculine career. This hidden curriculum determines that sports should be defined by sex and that extracurricular and art activities should be different for boys and girls.

In spite of this, women's social movements have struggled for advances that include the right to citizenship and to anti-discrimination and gender equality policies guaranteed by the country's political constitution and its rules and regulations.

In addition, social movements have pushed for a woman's right to inherit and manage her own patrimony, for improvements in her

ability to do paid work, including jobs previously reserved for men, and for the acknowledgement of the important role women play in development and in maintaining their homes with their own income.

Finally, from the feminization of certain university areas (such as law) to the inclusion of women in traditionally male jobs and careers such as engineering, business administration, economics, architecture, physics and chemistry, women in Colombia have been gaining ground.

The most general features of the socio-cultural context of women's education programmes have been pointed out here. However, it should also be noted that there are more specific contexts, determined by the participating women's culture, ethnic group and social position, which intervene in the interaction with other elements of the pedagogical process of women's programmes.

Women participating in education programmes

Women who participate in education programmes belong to the popular sectors, live in rural or marginal urban areas, are indigenous, black or peasants, are domestic workers, small businesswomen or work in the informal sector of the economy. The most successful women's education programmes acknowledge this plurality and focus their educational work on the specific attributes of the women they work with. However, women's history of subordination in Latin America allows us to point out certain common features that each local culture expresses differently. Thus, for example, these women have a conflictual relationship with their bodies. On the one hand, they try to adjust to the social image of bodily aesthetics that invites an erotic response and, on the other, they are forced to accept social patterns that demand modesty and virtue. In many indigenous groups, women are not allowed to recognize their body as a source

of pleasure (Hernández and Muquialday, 1992). In certain groups of black people, in contrast, women are seen as "devourers of men", full of sensuality: the perfect lovers.

Female teachers or facilitators in women's education programmes

During the First Meeting of Female Teachers of the Cauca Valley (Buga, March, 1989) one of the teachers said: "You not only teach what you know, you teach what you are." This statement powerfully summarizes the relation between facilitators and participants in education programmes for women. These teachers, just like those attending the aforementioned meeting, state:

> "...it is as if we emerged from a long sentence and started to build new paths by undoing what we have done in order to recover our history and be born again... it is our purpose to discover ourselves, to know who we are, how we are, to share in the permanent observation and reflection about ourselves in order not to become imprisoned again... we are now committed to recovering our identity as individuals, human beings, with incalculable life potential to share with others and in the first place with our students..."

Belenky et al. (1986) consider female teachers of women's programmes as "midwives" since they help women to "give birth" to their ideas, to make their voices heard, to turn their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and work with it. They help to articulate and expand the intuitive knowledge of the women who participate in these programmes. They are midwife-teachers who do not anaesthetize women, but instead support their thinking process without trying to think for them. They attend to women who are in the process of structuring their self-awareness. The midwife-teachers

do not concentrate on their own knowledge, but on that of the participants and encourage them to use this knowledge in their everyday lives. They trust their students' ideas and encourage them to expand them.

Because teachers or facilitators of this sort are deeply involved in the object of their teaching (being women), Janice Raymond (1985) believes their teaching is "passionate" since they are not really "neutral" in regard to their work with women. It is basically a women's encounter during which they analyse their condition as women and together explore possibilities for personal realization. The themes on which they work suggest primary or secondary, tactical or strategic demands concerning both facilitators and participants as a whole.

An important fact regarding the teachers of education programmes for women is that most of them are not professional educators. Some are social workers, psychologists, sociologists, lawyers, economists, political scientists, business administrators, nurses, doctors, therapists, engineers, environmentalists, etc. Perhaps that is why the text entitled *Género, educación y economía popular* (1995) (Gender, Education and Popular Economy) of the *Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres* (Popular Education Network among Women, REPEM) notes that:

> "The lack of a specific preparation of the educator-facilitator, added to the low use of the available resources in each country, often leads to mistakes that are later punished by the market because of lack of appropriateness and competitiveness... The educator should demonstrate a series of characteristics, having become a specialist professional, taken on a 'gender perspective' in their concept of development, trained in business and in adult education, cultural and social aspects, including methodology, and acquired adequate information to coordinate actions with specialists."

Range of knowledge in programmes

Education programmes with popular sector women usually fall into one of the following modalities: non-formal, adult, or post-literacy education. These modalities guarantee the necessary flexibility to adjust the contents to women's needs and to the interests of the sponsoring or guiding agencies.

Themes of work thus respond to the problems affecting women: health, the environment, family, work, violence, etc., all of which are geared to empowering women for effective social and political participation in community life and are linked with topics concerning gender to help raise awareness among women of their historical condition and socio-cultural inferiority. The organization of the contents of women's programmes is markedly characterized by the way in which it integrates historical, cultural, social, political and everyday aspects, and by its attempt to face the traditional separation between the private and public spheres, the political and personal levels. Gender themes usually start by sensitizing women with their here and now in which they have the opportunity to recognize their social condition and to value their social performance by the number of tasks they must perform, the functions appointed to their gender and the time they invest linked to the low social appreciation for their work. The concepts covered in these programmes include gender, identity, autonomy, empowerment, practical and strategic interests and other social roles.

Gender analysis expresses how each culture assumes men and women must be empowered. It challenges learnt behaviour that is unnatural and can suggest how it can be changed. Hence women's traditional roles linked to motherhood can change; what is more, men and women may exchange roles. It follows that both men and women can fulfil public and private functions and that both men and women may take on "masculine" and "feminine" attributes. It recognizes that relations between men and women may change and

hierarchies that consider the feminine as something secondary may be eradicated, and that both men and women may perform heavy or light work.

When talking about *empowerment* one is generally referring to women's decision-making capacity, to their possibility of asserting their own identity and of increasing their self-esteem. It also refers to the development of skills and capacities to lead and control their own lives and to change the way in which power is distributed both in interpersonal relations and in social institutions. Empowerment is not a state, it is a gradual and at the same time dynamic process that allows women to gain autonomy, develop dignity and awareness of their own value and increase their capacities in order to change the structures and ideologies that keep them subjected. It is not only a question of changing hierarchical relations but of transforming all hierarchical relations in society.

Identity, on the other hand, is understood as the notion of what one is. When one is asked, "Who are you?", the answer invariably gives information about one's own identity: "I am an indigenous woman, mother of five, married to a peasant; a Catholic, liberal, member of the group Indigenous Women in Colombia and a craftswoman." You are not born with an identity. You are born into a family that belongs to a certain culture and you construct your identity throughout your life, in your relations with family and neighbours, and with the groups you belong to. Identity thus has multiple facets related to gender, ethnic group, nationality, religion, occupation, political membership, etc. To build an identity involves deciding what projects to join: women's, indigenous people's, Protestant, Catholic, communist or conservative projects. It also means deciding whom you differ from and whom you feel equal to. Your own identity is built with others, those of the same group, and in relation to others, those of other groups. Social identities are built by recovering the past. But this must be done critically since there are traditions that we do not want to recover,

such as the domination of the father or the husband over daughters and wives, for example; by acknowledging certain foundation myths, such as those stating that black women are sensual and indigenous women obedient; by adopting symbols that unify one's own social group. These ideas, examined in workshops held by education programmes for women, become tools for women's transformation.

Autonomy refers to education for personal and social self-reliance. Autonomy is characterized by morals based on personal beliefs with values and norms one creates oneself. Autonomous individuals and groups do not respond to the needs of others; cannot be manipulated; always look for a reason to do or not to do something and create their own norms to regulate their social life; they rule themselves and know how to respect others (Díaz and Zúñiga, 1990).

Practical and strategic interests of gender

While these concepts, shared by Maxine Molyneux (1985), have helped to provide the theoretical basis for training events that are deeply committed to a gender perspective, and for educational projects aiming at change in the long term, they have been in danger of becoming schematic. Practical gender interests determine women's situation or condition; they depend on women's social context in a given job, generation, ethnic or religious group, and set out to develop knowledge and skills to deal with the immediate challenges faced by each group or condition. To challenge poverty, for example, some women's groups may decide to create micro-businesses in areas reinforcing their traditional roles such as clothes design, restaurants or laundries. These micro-businesses may partly solve their income problem, but they follow the social pattern of "women's jobs". Strategic gender interests are those that aim at generating or strengthening cultural changes that acknowledge

women as people with the same conditions and possibilities as men. They are "a way of thinking with women's common interests in mind. These are the interests that are closer to a feminist project . . . they relate to overcoming feminine subordination, with political participation on an equal plane with men and the elimination of discrimination" (Anderson, 1992).

A woman's triple role

The triple role concept has also run the risk of becoming schematic, but has nevertheless been of use to women's sensitization process in regard to their own worth and social contribution. It is based on the idea of a sexual division of labour and shows how women participate in labour force reproduction not only by having children and teaching them, but also by working for the labour force's welfare by providing food, shelter, health maintenance services, family welfare services and so on at home. This is a woman's reproductive role. Her second role, her productive role, refers to a woman's paid work with which she sustains or helps to sustain her family. It is a role she performs at the same time as the reproductive role. Her third role, her role as community manager, refers to women's increasingly committed participation in community activities that often are but ways of extending their reproductive role to their surroundings, thus creating a kind of "social motherhood" (Zúñiga and Gómez, 1995).

Methods used in education programmes with women

If methods are understood as a guide to teaching procedures that enable the participants to make learning their own in a creative way and aim at an integral transformation of their awareness structure, knowledge and practice as well as of their attitudes and inclinations, the most successful non-formal education programmes for women can be seen to incorporate the following procedural principles:

- They set out from women's here and now. The participants' specific issues, whether they are indigenous, black, peasants, servants, micro-businesswomen, girls, adults or elderly women, are first identified and then confronted via generative activities, such as "Who am I?".
- They recognize the intuitive, implicit and holistic knowledge women have and try to make it explicit, to broaden or modify it and to turn it into practical knowledge applicable to everyday life. Women's everyday life is thus constantly evoked and efforts are made to project it under desirable and feasible conditions. That is also the reason why women's points of view are acknowledged.
- They encourage an analysis of the conceptions each participant has and the new conceptions that the participants and facilitators generate together, in order to clarify them, differentiate them from traditional conceptions and generate new questions and practical applications. They encourage the search to understand the causes of the prejudices, myths and conditions of subordination affecting women.
- They create an atmosphere of free expression that encourages women's participation and acknowledges women's voices by turning the spaces in which the courses, workshops and seminars take place into "safe places" in which they do not judge each other. There is an atmosphere of trust and solidarity, but concepts, prejudices and ideas are nevertheless criticized.

Transformation messages, new forms of learning, are worked with in a significant way, i.e. in such a way that they may make sense to women in their specific conditions. Plurality is acknowledged within similarity. Experiential, dynamic and expressive techniques are used in the context of the women's culture and their way of being and doing. These are techniques that first reconstruct the existing conceptions regarding women in order

to then deconstruct them and construct new gender conceptions. Process as a complex internal movement defined by each individual's characteristics is emphasised. It is recognized that it is making one's own path that turns out to be formative since the product is not at the end of the path. It is throughout the journey that achievements are reached.

The dialectical relationship between thought and action is acknowledged by trying to encourage innovative actions that may change thought structures in order to guide new actions:

- Learning spaces are treated as spaces shared by both participants and trainers in which women's problems are highlighted, analysed and synthesised in a supportive way. The human capacity for creative play, which these women can rarely experience in their domestic sphere and in their overloaded working life, is also developed.
- A sense of belonging to the group of participants is created which helps them to become social subjects with gender awareness and thus with social perspectives.
- Holistic learning is encouraged through encounters with other women and in dialogues in which both facilitator and participants all share their own experiences and knowledge without feeling anxious because their answers are only provisional.
- A healthy and informed relationship with their own body is encouraged through experiential dynamics enabling acceptance and self-esteem.
- The idea of "thinking globally" about women's condition and "acting locally" in order to transform them is promoted.
- Workshops, seminars and participatory modules are used as the most common learning environments, with events encouraging participation and dialogue, generating self-esteem, autonomy and empowerment processes.

- Interactive worksheets and workbooks that are full of images and examples are mainly used as support materials. Videos, cartoons, paintings, songs, poems, proverbs, metaphors and verses are also used.
- In both the learning environment and the support materials it is acknowledged that learning is not a linear process that goes from the known to the unknown, but rather that it moves in a circular fashion and breaks away from the conventional dependence on experts (both men and women). The experiences and learning which the facilitators and participants have in common are used as tools that articulate their individual life stories with their cultural, social and political context.

Underlying ideals

Most educational experiences with grassroots women are underpinned by development ideals. Historically, since the fifties, when Latin American countries started drawing up development plans, different approaches have been proposed which attempt to involve women in development. Magdalena León, in her lecture at the Seminar-Workshop on Women's Organization Experiences (Cali, December, 1996), classified these approaches in two categories: those that go from development to women (welfare, equality, anti-poverty and efficiency approaches) and those that go from women to development (empowerment and gender perspective in development approaches).

Welfare is the oldest approach. It considers women as a vulnerable group to whom emergency aid programmes must be addressed because of their role as wives and mothers concerned with their family's welfare. Education programmes for these women are geared to training them how to maintain family health, care for children and the elderly, fight malnutrition within the

family, guarantee child development, control population growth and maintain their husbands' and older children's productive capacity.

The equality approach acknowledges that women participate actively in development not only through their reproductive roles, but also by contributing to economic growth through their productive role as agriculturalists, industrial labourers and independent workers. It attempts to "incorporate" them into the labour market. Education programmes for women are therefore aimed at providing them with work-oriented technical skills. The purpose of this approach is to reduce inequality between men and women, and particularly the sexual division of work.

The anti-poverty focus puts forward the idea that economic inequality between men and women is not linked to subordination, but rather to poverty. Development plans therefore seek to assist poor female workers by creating employment and training them technically in order to strengthen their productive role, thus enabling them to access the necessary capital and resources in order to generate an income and improve their circumstances.

A further approach is linked to efficiency. This links women's improved economic participation to greater equity between men and women. It assumes that keeping women in the margins of economic development is to "waste" 50% of the human resources for such development.

Empowerment recognizes inequality between men and women and the origins of women's subordination in the family, and notes that women experience oppression differently depending on the social class, ethnic group and generation they belong to. Although this approach "recognizes the importance that women increase their power, it seeks to identify it less in terms of domination over others and more in terms of women's capacity to increase their own trust in themselves and their inner strength" (Moser, 1992). The education programmes of this approach always have a gender

component that raises awareness about women's conditions and encourages social and political participation.

Finally, the gender in development approach bases its analysis and proposals for enabling a significant change in gender relations on women's socio-cultural situation. The gender aspect focuses on the development of women's subordination and discrimination and seeks equality, understood not in terms of becoming the same as or equal to men, but in terms of a qualitative value change in relations between men and women that acknowledges their differences (which are not fundamental and do not imply hierarchies). It seeks freedom for both men and women to choose roles, and a quality of life created by all (men and women) in a participatory way. Development is regarded as a quality of life defined by social subjects (men and women) without social discrimination and in a democratic way that takes place not only in the public and community spheres, but particularly in the home's private sphere.

Education programmes with a vision of development from a gender perspective assume the following educational guidelines:

- They help participants not only to read and understand words, but also to read, understand and change the world.
- They help women to develop analytical skills, break the silence and make themselves visible in the public sphere.
- They strengthen women's trust in themselves and self-esteem, and they support organizational processes.
- They promote women's participation in society, politics and family decision-making.
- They encourage values such as justice, solidarity and honesty.
- They promote the creation of a vision of the future through sustainable and democratic development.

Efforts currently being made by women's groups such as the *Grupo Amplio de Mujeres de Cali* (Cali Broad Women's Group)

and the *Centro de Estudios de Género de la Universidad del Valle* (Gender Studies Centre of University of El Valle), also in Cali, aim to build indicators of management and achievements with a gender perspective linking the objectives of the Beijing '95 action plan with the strategies of local development plans.

As the women's movement advances in education it becomes critically important for it to go deeper into each of the elements of the educational process: context, students, teachers, knowledge, methods and proposals. As it does so it will enable women to transform their situation in accordance with their own lives.

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Chapter 4

The Education Dimension in Projects with Women

Manuel Bastias U.

Some project orientations

A common aspect of education projects with women which propose changes in the social and symbolic construction of femininity and masculinity in their respective societies, is that they are being implemented in the framework of market economies. This not only excludes many important sectors of society but may also weaken women's self-esteem and organization, and result in cultural disintegration, identity loss, the devaluation of social-community values, and the weakening of everyday social links. These initiatives nevertheless demonstrate the capacity of organizations in Latin America, particularly NGOs, to take the new political, social and institutional realities into account when developing innovative strategies leading to improvements in women's socio-political situation. The variety of initiatives that aim at changing women's condition is a response to the great diversity of contexts existing in the region.

Decentralization and regional and state reform processes appear to be of great relevance to non-formal education initiatives. Many of the projects believe these changes in the political structure can create opportunities for the strengthening of women's socio-political participation. However, it is important to note that the logic these projects use differs from that of state decentralization

since they are geared towards women becoming actors themselves, i.e. promoting and strengthening the presence of women.

Democratization in Latin America, where for decades the elimination or reduction of democratic institutions was common, is a second aspect guiding the practice of the projects presented. In this context of the reconstruction of Latin American democracy, the discourse and practice of non-formal education initiatives are geared to strengthening democracy by improving its participatory character so that women can be part of a committed and active citizenship. Three basic ideas interact behind this idea of participatory democracy: firstly, the activation of civil society by the recognition of women as social actors and increasing their number; secondly, the use of the public arena rather than the state as a meeting point to provide space for women as social actors; and thirdly, the establishment of a new articulation between state and civil society in which women's organizations have the necessary strength and mechanisms to help give shape to women's various expression.

This orientation towards participatory democracy and the strengthening of women's organizations has a firm presence in many women's projects throughout the region. Following a participatory approach and developing educational contexts with grassroots women's groups, these projects combine the creation of women's leadership and spaces of their own with specific skills to interact with other actors. In spite of the diversity of countries represented, they are all linked by their desire to strengthen women's organization and raise women's capacities to take decisions in their public and private lives with the aim of achieving democracy, equity, justice and fuller participation.

The third aspect guiding most education projects relates to the economic and social crisis which has affected Latin America since the eighties and which has generated inequality and segregated various sectors of the population, in particular women, who are

only fringe beneficiaries of economic growth. The initiatives presented at the seminar propose new development alternatives in the context of improving the quality of life of women by meeting not only their subsistence needs but also their needs in relation to participation, citizenry, freedom, identity, and cultural and spiritual matters.

In this respect some of these educational projects also emphasise the importance of promoting economic activities, generating employment and developing production initiatives with the aim of achieving women's human and socio-political development. Several therefore promote activities geared to the sphere of economic productivity and put forward policies promoting small and medium-scale economic units as well as the creation of micro-business management skills among women. Poverty levels as documented in virtually all surveys in the region are highest among the female sector of the population. The large number of female-headed households contributes to this urgent need to provide poor women with potential income generating activities through education.

It should be noted that most of the projects analysed are geared to the development of symbolic, subjective and affective aspects among the women participating, such as retrieving their cultural roots, valuing their own culture and developing identity and self-esteem. The educational development of this symbolic and cultural dimension, particularly self-esteem, is of great relevance to women in Latin America..

Women's education and empowerment

For decades, Latin American countries have made great efforts to increase the levels and coverage of women's education in the hope that access to education would improve their quality of life and generate social mobility and freedom from poverty. These expec-

tations have been more or less frustrated since women's poverty has not been reduced, but has in fact increased significantly. Many women have fallen into abject poverty, and cannot take advantage of a wide spectrum of economic, social and political rights and prerogatives.

Nevertheless, a new debate on development has recently begun. Owing to the fact that economic factors are no longer considered to be the only determinants of growth, new perspectives are opening up. CEPAL's proposal regarding productive transformation with equity underscores the relation between education and development and refers to the urgent need to implement new education strategies in order to achieve development (CEPAL/ UNESCO, 1992). The interesting aspect of this model does not lie in its call to modernize the Latin American economies, to arrive at agreements among a country's different social actors and to reach international co-operation, but rather in its forecast that countries and localities will be doomed to lose competitiveness and to fail economically unless they have competent human resources with knowledge, as well as powerful, coherent and consistent technical, social and ethical tools enabling them to plan actions, put initiatives forward and create new realities in their immediate environment, in the medium and long term.

Apart from the controversial aspects of this proposal, it should be recognized that in this increasingly changeable, complex and unpredictable world it will become impossible for rich and poor countries or localities to compete and close the gap between them by appealing merely to technical factors. Growth will not be achieved by employing cheap labour, but by the quality of the human factor and the capacity of the different social systems to elaborate education policies and strategies so that knowledge and learning enable people to liberate all their talents, energies and capacities.

The Jomtien Conference highlighted once again the relationship between education and development by underlining the importance of basic education. The term basic education is here no longer associated with primary schooling since its intention is to enable all the population – children, youth, women or adults in general – to acquire basic skills. This interest in basic education, together with decentralization processes, is giving rise to a series of critical discourses and providing new perspectives that acknowledge the contributions that can be made to basic skills and competences if both formal and informal education relate more closely to local environments and social groupings.

The projects presented at the seminar are concerned with improving women's situation, giving education a different meaning, and searching for modalities and strategies that will enable women to obtain the basic skills needed to gain access to opportunities and participate, as subjects rather than objects, in development processes.

Education thus appears as the principal basis from which to promote the sought-after changes in women's current situation in Latin America, particularly in those fields that present obstacles to empowerment and autonomy, such as poverty, health, violence, human rights, economic participation, and the distribution of power and decision-making. However, apart from understanding the strategic relation between education and empowerment, it is important not to confuse any activity involving women with education from a gender perspective. Education to promote women should include initiatives that women themselves generate and develop since their educational purpose is to facilitate women's own empowerment and autonomy. In other words, education for women contains planned and intentional activities that aim at helping disadvantaged women to gain control over the events that determine their lives, via knowledge and skills, and participate as

subjects in the construction of the type of culture, economy and society which the gender perspective wishes to achieve.

Finally, most of the experiences presented at the Melgar seminar share the belief that in order to advance women's empowerment and autonomy it is essential to promote a high-quality education encouraging those who participate to acquire new knowledge, aptitudes and values. The objectives of non-formal education projects as a whole are to transmit knowledge that women can apply to the immediate environment of their everyday lives and, in particular, to create conditions for them to be able to respond to the economic, social and political demands of achieving social equality.

One of the main concerns of the initiatives presented at the seminar is to develop education strategies aimed at improving women's technical, social and political capacities through the use of participatory methodologies. In other words, most of the projects analysed use workshops, team work, expression, participation, play, reflection, confronting of knowledge, experience, subjectivity and a constant relationship between theory and practice. Although the achievements attained by these non-formal initiatives may seem moderate from the point of view of quantitatively meeting women's unsatisfied educational needs, from a qualitative standpoint, they have achieved substantial results, particularly in creating some basic conditions for the participants' educational development.

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Chapter 5

Everyday Violence and Women's Education in Latin America

Linda King

Introduction

At the Melgar seminar on innovation in non-formal women's education in Latin America, the issue of violence was explicit in several of the projects presented and implicit in others. Yet it did not form one of the central areas of discussion. In retrospect, it seemed pertinent to draw together some of the experiences presented in Melgar and from other published sources to highlight these issues and the effects on women's education of contexts of violence. It is an area that has yet to be more completely analysed but cries out for attention. A recent World Bank study (Heise, 1994) cites several international surveys that single out violence as the key issue that women perceive as affecting their lives, and one of the areas on which international funding agencies should focus their attention in the future. In turn, according to a report by UNESCO based on an Inter-American Bank study, Latin America is by far the most violent region in the world.[4]

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[4] For every 100 000 inhabitants Colombia has an annual average of 77 homicides, the Andean countries on average 40, Brazil 24 and Mexico 20. This compares with 1 in Japan, 3 in Germany, 5 in Paraguay, and 9 in the United States (UNESCO, 1997; Ratinoff, 1996.)

While it is something of a truism to say that most acts of violence are perpetrated by men, by men against other men, and by men against women, the conditions for the carrying out of violent acts are socially and culturally produced, and have to do with the roles of men and women in different societies and at different stages of history. Violence may be qualified, not only by *where* it is committed, that is, it may be socially permissible to hurt someone intentionally in certain geographically enclosed spaces, (for example, in institutions of punishment, in certain sports arenas, or even within the four walls of domesticity), by *when* it is committed, that is, at certain historical moments in time (for example, during war and revolution) but also by *cultural conditioning*, that is, the way in which some cultures may allow and reproduce violence more explicitly than others.

At the heart of the situation of violence that affects women in Latin America and throughout the world is the notion of physical integrity, in other words, the right to security and control over one's body. Such a right is both individual and social: the right of the individual woman to freedom from violence and the right of society, and women as collective members of that society, to be free from violence and from the conditions that contribute to its generation. Consequently, it is the hidden violence of this crucial aspect of gender relations in Latin America and elsewhere in the world that adult education initiatives urgently need to uncover and to challenge. The focus on violence and the implications of violence for women in Latin America is not intended as a negative criticism. On the contrary, the message from Melgar is one of hope and creativity for women's non-formal education, for amidst the negations and abuses of freedom that still exist in many Latin American societies, a new civil society in which women from the grassroots movement are major protagonists is taking shape.

In the sections that follow, and drawing substantively on the experiences presented at the Melgar seminar, I focus on violence

in its various dimensions as it affects women in Latin America. I begin with ethnic violence and the way this is conditioned by gender. I then go on to discuss the specifics of gender violence itself, focusing on some of the theoretical aspects, and place this in the context of other kinds of violence to be found in the Latin American region, namely political violence, *narco* violence and the implicit structural violence. Throughout, it is the voices of the women of Latin America who are speaking, denouncing, and ultimately resolving the conditions of violence which exist on the continent. Although, as I stress, these conditions of violence are not exclusive to Latin America, by examining women's experiences in one region we can begin to get an overall view of how these interact and how the women's movement is critically addressing these problems.

Ethnic violence

Ethnic violence is not necessarily a question of racism as it may be understood in the United States or Europe. In many countries of Latin America, it can even be difficult to make a distinction between people after so many years of racial mixing. Nevertheless, while it is almost always the case that the population of evident European descent will belong to the richer strata of society, the population of Indian descent is almost always at the bottom of the scale. In virtually every country in Latin America, the indigenous population has been and is still discriminated against both in terms of access to public services, such as health and education, and in terms of perceived status. This has translated indirectly into terms of abuse and ridicule used by the *mestizo* national society to refer to the indigenous population and more directly into the repression, by force, of expressions of separate identity by indigenous peoples at different moments in time.

According to Albo (1994), in his discussion of ethnic violence in Bolivia, although skin colour is an element of ethnic discrimination, more significant are the symbols of ethnicity reflected in such elements as dress and language, since these are the most visible and audible markers of difference. In both cases, however, gender cuts across ethnicity to single out women as most vulnerable to these kinds of discrimination. Firstly, it is predominantly the women who have retained traditional dress, and who are therefore most visible. Secondly, it is predominantly the women who are monolingual in the indigenous languages and who, having less access to formal instruction, are at greatest disadvantage in linguistic exchanges outside their traditional communities. And thirdly, in direct consequence of the latter, it is the women who are predominantly illiterate and who have less access to legal defence mechanisms against discrimination.

According to the report presented by the *Centro de Capacitación Integral de la Mujer Campesina* (Peasant Women's Integrated Skills Centre – C-CICMA) in Bolivia, one in every four women in Bolivia is illiterate, 70% of the female population live in rural areas and 60% of girls do not go to school, with obvious consequences for literacy levels. The school drop-out statistics, moreover, feature girls much more than boys. Why is this so? If we go back to the concept of ethnic violence, we are told by the C-CIMCA report that "in rural areas the cultural violence that threatens children who do not speak Spanish, the frequent cases of assault and rape perpetrated against women, and the distances that girls have to walk to school, are reasons why parents fail to register them in school." Ethnic identity then, which is more symbolically apparent and visible amongst women, is a feature of the structural violence which does not allow them to participate in the education system for fear of physical attack and/or sexual violence. The ethnic population of Bolivia, although numerically the majority, is subject to conditions of structural violence that are specific to

indigenous groups throughout the world but more particularly in Latin America. Quechua and Aymara are the largest indigenous groups in Bolivia, representing between them 60% of the national population, with many other smaller groups such as the Guaraní, comprising another 2 per cent.

The classification of indigenous women as inferior, justifies certain ways of treating them because firstly, they do not have recourse to the protection of the legal system and secondly, patriarchal society accepts this as normal. A culture of violence exists in which the classification justifies the treatment. If in Latin America, *mestizo* and white society has classified the Indian as "stupid and ignorant", able to speak only "dialects" and not languages, "lazy, backward, and slow", the same attitude of cultural superiority supposedly justifies the ill-treatment of indigenous peoples, in other words, what we may call ethnic violence. Gender exacerbates the situation, women being subject to quite specific forms of cultural violence accentuated by sexual violence. Parents wishing to protect their daughters are forced to reproduce a situation of inequality or risk violence towards them.

Gender violence

Gender violence in Latin America has been traditionally associated with the ideology of *machismo*. It is violence perpetrated by the male subject against the female object. Gender violence generally refers to sexual violence such as rape and incest, and domestic violence such as wife battering, and abuse. While gender violence is not unique to Latin America and indeed is a worldwide phenomenon, it is an area that is only just beginning to receive the attention it requires if any solutions are to be found. Furthermore, it is an area that is characterized by taboo, by family boundaries, by secrecy and by shame. It is not easily mentioned in public, and it is only with the advent of the women's movement that attention

has been given to a situation which has reached crisis proportions if we are to believe the figures.

Virtually all the participants in the seminar mentioned the word "violence" at least once in their initial presentations, as being a feature of the societies in which they live and which inevitably affects women and the kinds of projects that are developed for and by them. However, some of the projects presented at Melgar have focused more specifically on the notion of gender violence in the two dimensions already suggested, in other words the sexual violence of rape and incest, and the domestic violence of wife battering and abuse.

The *Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones de la Mujer Ecuatoriana* (Ecuadorian Women's Study and Research Centre – CEIME) says that six out of ten women in Ecuador state that they are subject to physical violence in the home from their partners. The figures are alarming, CEIME reports, and the group most in danger is young women between 14 and 17 years of age. In the *Comisaria de la Mujer y la Familia de Quito* (Quito Crime Centre for Women and the Family), an average of ten adolescent women a day report acts of gender violence against them. This project constitutes a response to the problem of violence and human rights with regard to women in Ecuador. The aim is to focus public attention on the issue of gender violence, and to provide educational opportunities for young men and women from the ages of 14 to 18 to come together to discuss and analyse gender violence and to reconstruct new kinds of gender relationships. CEIME also carries out research into these issues and has found that according to school principals something like 80% of adolescents in middle and low income families suffer from violent family situations. In addition CEIME also carries out therapeutic work with women who have been victims of violence.

The *Centro de Derechos de Mujeres de Honduras* (Honduras Women's Rights Centre) reports that on the basis of various small-

scale studies, it estimates that some 80% of women in Honduras have suffered violence in their marital relationships. The feminist movement in Honduras, it maintains, has succeeded in bringing attention to the issue by introducing reforms to the penal code regarding sexual violence and drafting a proposal for a law prohibiting domestic violence. The Honduras Commission on Human Rights, moreover, recently established a special programme on violence towards women. The Women's Rights Centre has focused its attention on training community legal defenders, women from the community and grassroots who can teach other women about their rights in situations of domestic violence and abuse.

A variety of mechanisms within society's culture both diffuse the idea of violence towards women as acceptable and reproduce the violence themselves: "Even where a particular act of violence might be deplored , powerful social institutions – the state, families, normative systems that regulate gender relations – collude in maintaining the status quo" (Heise, 1994: 1).

In this context, we should also mention the powerful images perpetrated by the mass media in both an aggressive and a passive way. Not only are the stereotypes glorified through the *telenovelas,* or soap operas, broadcast daily to the homes of millions of Latin Americans, but the non-fictional images are also those of male destruction, with bombs, wars, guerrilla groups, murder and kidnapping being presented as normal activities for men to be engaged in.

Almost all direct violence is perpetrated by men. In Canada, for example, 95% of women who are murdered, are murdered by men (Heise 1994: 14). The same averages apply to Mexico (de Keizjer 1996: 13) and probably to many countries in the world. This is not to say that men do not murder each other, indeed they do. In Mexico, homicide is the second cause of death in the 15 to 24 age group (ibid). In a variety of studies undertaken in different

countries, and using different survey and statistical methods, presented by Heise (1994), estimates for domestic violence vary from over 60% in several cases to 20% at the lower end of the scale (pp. 6-10). Research in New Zealand is revealing the extent of sexual abuse and domestic violence. According to Marie (1997), one in five of all women has been sexually abused before the age of 16, and 80% of violent incidents reported to the police are a result of domestic violence. These are chilling figures that are only just beginning to emerge. Small wonder that women cite violence as the single most important issue which affects their lives.

According to Galtung (1996), violence is associated with sexuality. Part of the explanation for the male predominance in violence may be found, he maintains, in the interface between male sexuality and male aggression. He proposes six hypotheses to explain violence. All have to do with biological factors, mainly triggering mechanisms which accompany both the sexual and the physically aggressive response. However, he suggests that biological factors have probably only a 10-20% input into explaining violent behaviour. To understand male violent behaviour we also need to examine cultural factors which intersect with psychological consequences and to dissect the nature of patriarchy. It is indeed this failure to identify the nature of patriarchy that constitutes a culture of violence itself, and which the feminist movement has done so much to decodify: "patriarchy like any other deeply violent social formation.....combines direct, structural, and cultural violence in a vicious triangle. They reinforce each other in cycles starting from any corner. Direct violence such as rape, intimidates and represses; structural violence institutionalizes; and cultural violence internalizes that relation..." (Galtung, 1996: 40).

Other specialists, however, dispute the supposed biological origins of male aggression. Adams (1992), for example, maintains that biologically, the female of most animal species is as

aggressive as the male, and that the emotions which trigger aggression in men are similar emotions to those experienced by women. There is no natural or biological origin which makes men more aggressive than women, or conversely women less aggressive than men. The issue is rather that biological research has tended to be carried out through the lenses of the male gender and therefore has focused less on female aggression or on shared emotions producing aggressive responses. Like Galtung, Adams thinks that explanations can be found in cultural norms.

Yet the relation between the cultural, biological, psychological and structural is complex and difficult to unravel. It goes without saying that the family in different cultural contexts socializes boys in different ways from girls, and that the greater freedom given to boys allows them to develop increased physical confidence and risk-taking. There is no particular reason for this other than culture, and culture's efforts to protect women from risk-taking, for girls may become "tomboys" and have just as much fun, despite running the risk of having their sexual identity denied. In turn, schools reinforce the family's socialization. Faune (1996: 148) reports in an analysis of Central American textbooks that in the majority of cases, men were typified as authoritative, serious and tough, women as affectionate, passive and submissive.

So why are men more violent than women? One explanation is that men use violence to assert their masculinity, so that when they perceive their masculine identity to be under threat they become violent. This is particularly the case in domestic violence where men may see that the gender relations to which they are accustomed are being threatened by the woman. Hitting women may moreover be a culturally accepted norm (de Keijzer 1996: 9). In the same way, sexuality becomes a means of expressing power and asserting dominance based on possession of the woman. Enforced sexual relations are also often used to express dominance

in men's rape of other men, particularly in police abuse and in prison or torture situations.

Political violence

Political violence has to do with the very essence of democracy and citizenship and comes about as a result of the lack of peaceful means of resolving opposing discourses and struggles for political space. Political violence is a very real part of everyday life in many Latin American countries, and while in one sense everyone is potentially a victim of political violence by virtue of living in disputed territories, gender cuts across political violence to affect women in very specific ways. Political violence, by targeting men in particular, leaves women to cope with the aftermath. In Guatemala alone, according to official figures, a quarter of a million women were widowed during the political violence (Faune 1996: 50).

The *Centro de Promocion y Desarrollo Poblacional* (Centre for Population Development and Promotion – CEPRODEP) in Peru has as a major activity the *Project on Women in Reconstruction and Regional Development.* The project emphasises that the women of Peru are the ones who were most affected by the process of displacement which took place during the period of the guerrilla movement in Peru. Of the families displaced by the violence approximately 70% are households headed by women whose husbands have either left home or been killed. Ironically, though, the total disintegration of those areas of Peru most affected by the period of political violence, which forced the displaced families to reorganize themselves, has offered women the opportunity to redefine their roles and to participate increasingly in the public sphere. It has also led to new forms of non-formal education such as the women's committees and the leadership training programme for women:

> "Faced with the disintegration of families, the breakdown of income-generating mechanisms and the progressive denial of security and adequate living conditions, these women – who have had to take on new roles traditionally assumed by men, such as family maintenance, public representation, heading the family, economic and productive activity, communal management and self-defence – have entered the public sphere in search of solutions." (This volume)

La Escuela para Dirigentes Populares (School for Grassroots Women Leaders), a popular education programme born in the slums of Lima, was likewise the product of the political situation in the country in 1992, where women lived in a state of generalized terror and in fear for their own lives. In this context, because it was so dangerous for the women working in grassroots organizations in the shanty towns to participate in training programmes near where they lived, *Fomento de la Vida* (Promotion of Life – FOVIDA) decided to organize courses at a location far away from the shanty towns. The result has been a leadership school for women which has prepared them for developing their grassroots and community skills.

In Colombia, estimates have put the number of displaced people resulting from political violence generated by the military, the guerrillas, the paramilitary and the *narcos* (the drug traders) at one million people (*Economist,* 5 April 1997). Another report states that one in 40 Colombians has been displaced, which is on a scale matched by Bosnia (*International Herald Tribune,* 15 September 1997). The same report claims that of the political killings only 5% of those who die actually have a gun in their hands:

> "The great majority are poor farmers accused by their killers of association with some group on the other side. They are

generally rounded up in tit for tat attacks and shot in cold blood, face down in the grass, Family members are often obliged to witness the killings before packing their belongings to leave."

When family members do leave, having undergone the trauma of the murder of their fathers, sons, brothers and husbands, they inevitably end up as female-headed households in the poor shanty towns.

According to the *Fundación de Apoyo Comunitario* (Community Support Foundation – FUNDAE), based in Bogotá, Colombia, 56% of displaced persons in Colombia are women and of these, 25% constitute female heads of households. These are usually poor peasant women with little or no education, trained only for working in the home or in the fields. According to the project *Vamos Mujer* in the Antioqueno region, 100% of women over the age of 40 had never been to school, while of those between the ages of 30 and 40, 60% had never had access to schooling. Most had ended up as domestic workers, receiving less than a minimum wage and with no social security to help in taking care of the family. In the shanty towns, young people grow up in conditions of structural violence that fuel the desire for revenge, and the desensitization to the inhumanity of the violence surrounding them propagates an even more complex situation. Children must work to support the family in these most precarious conditions, and schooling inevitably becomes a luxury that none can afford.

Estimates put the number of people killed in Colombia between 1990 and 1996 at 17,600. According to figures from 1992, of 1,100 municipalities in the country, 400 reported armed confrontation between the government and the guerillas. In addition, more than 2,300 hostages were kidnapped in the period between 1991 and 1994 (*Economist*, 13 January 1996). In 1995,

6,500 people were reported kidnapped in Latin America although the real figure is probably ten times this, since so many of the victims' families refuse to deal with the police both for fear of police extortion and fear of endangering their loved ones. The *Corporación Vamos Mujer* (Let's Go Women's Association – CVM) reports that in the northwest of the Antioqueno region of Colombia the violence occasioned by fighting between the military, the paramilitaries and the guerilla groups has resulted in a situation whereby women prefer to leave the area rather than risk themselves and their children getting killed or kidnapped. This has resulted in large numbers of displaced families headed by women.

Narco violence

One of the characteristics of those Latin American countries where drug lords have established some degree of political and social control in certain areas or cities is the related violence and terror that are associated with the organized production, movement and sale of illicit drugs and the laundering of money that is produced from this activity. The *narco* organizations, structured along military lines with lieutenants, captains, and subordinates and in which promotion may be achieved by being the most violent and aggressive is an essentially male organization. The level of violence, the atrocities carried out by *narcos*, and the fear that is generated by these organizations among the population, threaten the very notion of citizenship and democracy as it understood in society. How could *narco* violence develop? What distinguishes it from other kinds of violence? And how does it affect women in particular in Latin America?

In the case of Colombia, Francisco J. de Roux (1994: 92) writes:

> "During the last thirty years (1960-1990) a profound misalignment has developed between Colombia's institutions and the education, information, expectations, and needs of Colombians. This gap between institutions and people provided the perfect environment for an unhindered increase in drug trafficking, guerrilla and paramilitary movements, private justice and vendettas, and violations of humans rights."

The weak state structure, the extreme poverty of many regions of Latin American countries, and the neglect and lack of financial investment were counterbalanced by the strength of the quasi-military *narcos* who arrived in many remote regions and established planting, harvesting and marketing mechanisms to produce illegal crops. They provided both training to poor peasant producers and income. Weak political structures together with lack of accountability and corruption provided the ideal environment. Drug traffickers financed politicians and their political campaigns in exchange for favourable conditions; in turn they invested in the region, not only in the production of the illegal drugs but also in recreational facilities.

Inevitably, unhindered rivalry between different factions of what amounts to military structures led to a kind of warfare between different drug barons and between the civilian populations caught in the middle. Just as this situation developed in the poorest and most remote rural populations, especially those with weak links to the national governments, in particular the indigenous populations, so the same thing happened in the large urban conglomerations with shanty towns. In the poor neighbourhoods built up around these cities, lacking in public services and virtually abandoned by the government, the drug traffickers were easily able to recruit young men to work in the drug trade. Migrants from the countryside, for the most part unemployed and suffering an identity crisis as the traditional family structure began to break up, and

particularly young males, were all too easy targets of the drug traffickers.

As De Roux again states (1994: 98):

> "For these youths killing became easy. They worked as young assassins (*sicarios*) for the drug traffickers. For these youths, death was an integral part of their existence. They were forced to defend themselves against the police, who were also in certain cases hired killers for the drug traffickers. To young people who had to face death daily from the age of 15 and were unlikely to reach their eighteenth birthday alive, existence could be no more than "the moment".

Ironically, the solution proposed for the problem created by drug trafficking has been to create more violence in a never-ending round. The military may intervene either in the countryside or in the shanty towns but in doing so they only perpetuate more violence and greater desperation. In general, what has tended to happen is that as the military use force to clamp down on drug traffickers, they in turn resort to more violent crime in order to replace lost income, turning to kidnapping, armed robbery and the like. The climate of fear amongst the popular sectors has, moreover, led to what one researcher on the subject, de Souza (1995), calls an anthropological mutation. Referring to the people of Rio de Janeiro's shanty towns he says they have changed from being extrovert, friendly and optimistic to being downtrodden, mistrusting and despairing.

Drug trafficking has an effect not only on direct violence committed by the *narcos*, but also perpetuates a situation of structural violence. Although broadly paternalistic in the style of the so-called godfathers, handing out donations to community fiestas and families in need, the drug traffickers do not want to see improved standards of living for the families whose lives they

control. To improve sanitation, schools, transport, infrastructure or any other basic service, would effectively mean to allow citizens to develop, to move freely, to question and to find employment from other sources. In their militaristic style the traffickers maintain the status quo and in so doing secure the continuation of the pauperization of the urban and rural areas which they use as their physical bases.

As with political violence, *narco* violence tends to be an activity of men against men with far-reaching consequences for women and for traditional family structures. And as drug traffickers become increasingly involved in the politics of the region, the methods and results of drug-related violence have become intertwined with political violence.

Structural violence

By structural violence I am referring to the classic definition of indirect violence which is invisible and inherent in the structures of social organization (see Galtung 1996, etc.). Structural violence refers to those conditions under which people are subject to unnecessary suffering and pain as a result of social structures which oppress them. Structural violence may result in direct violence, particularly criminal violence, where unemployment and lack of social welfare programmes offer little alternative, or in political violence where the direct challenge to the status quo can only be made through organized combat.

The Honduras Women's Rights Centre highlights the true structural violence as a result of which women die and suffer throughout the world. In Honduras, it reports, every five hours a woman between the ages of 12 and 50 dies of a cause related to her reproductive health. The maternal mortality rate is extremely high, with 222 deaths for approximately every 100,000 births. In Peru, maternal mortality is associated with lack of access to education.

According to CEPRODEP, maternal mortality is ten times higher among uneducated women than among women with higher education. Clandestine abortions also account for much suffering and death, given that abortion is illegal in most of Latin America. The key issues of women's health, as also the mortality and morbidity rates associated with maternity, are part of structural violence.

One of the features of recent years has been a growth in the number of female-headed households in Latin America, and many of these are even headed by teenage girls under the age of 15. CEPRODEP reports that 3,900 female-run households in Peru are headed by women under the age of 15. Faune (1996), referring to Central American countries, maintains that a third of all households in the region are run by women. The Honduras Women's Rights Centre confirms this figure. Even though it is recorded that one quarter of all households in Honduras is headed by a female, in reality, they say, the figures are far above this, and are increasing daily. This figure shoots up to between 40 and 60 per cent in areas that are severely affected by poverty, violence and displacement. In Peru almost 70% of displaced families are headed by women. Most of these women are forced to find employment in the informal sector, and many end up as domestic workers or working on the streets selling sweets and newspapers. Even when poorer women have access to formal employment, they are usually paid less for the same job than men.

A gender perspective on the issue of households frequently highlights situations in which the *padres ausentes* (absent fathers) casually make use of the household structure from time to time, placing an added burden on women. Women will often put up with it for the sake of the children or for the prestige of having a man about the house; other cases of absent fathers involve these men being physically present but not contributing to the maintenance of

the household through being either drunk or out on the streets (*Vamos Mujer*).

Much of the structural violence that manifests itself in women's poor quality of life has often come about as a by-product of other forms of violence. For example, in Central America and Colombia political violence has left many women even poorer than they would normally have been because male family members who could have been called on for support in times of hardship have themselves been victims of political violence and civil unrest. Migration and displacement, also brought about through political violence, have further aggravated an already acute situation. In Guatemala alone, a country of ten million people, 3.5 million were displaced by the war (Faune, 1996). In what amounts to a terrible vicious circle, women are forced to live in the poorest and most unsafe conditions, perpetuating a culture of violence in which they play little part, other than as unwilling victims.

The feminization of poverty is another aspect of the increase in female-headed households. In Mexico, for example, according to the *Grupo de Educación Popular con Mujeres* (GEM), in 1990 it was estimated that 51% of women were living in poverty and that approximately 20% of women were living in conditions of extreme poverty. Most women were employed in the informal sector, yet when they were employed in the formal sector they suffered considerable gender discrimination. For example, almost 50% of salaried female workers were earning less than the official minimum wage, in comparison with a figure of only 20% for male workers. According to the national survey on fertility, it was estimated that 14% of households were headed by women and that of these households almost 63% existed on the equivalent of one minimum wage. In Bolivia it is estimated that 46% of all women show some form of malnutrition (C-CIMCA).

Conclusion

Women's non-formal education in Latin America is taking place in a context of everyday violence, a violence that hits out at them in scenarios of domestic abuse and sexual assault. In this respect it is like most other parts of the world to a greater or lesser degree. However, other areas of violence that are intermingled are more specific to Latin America such as the growth of drug-related violence, the extremes of political violence, and the subtle depths of ethnic violence. At the core of so much of these troubled contexts are a gender violence and a socialization process that prepare the ground for violence as a natural or logical outcome.

Different kinds of violence affect women's lives and education in different ways. Direct violence, whether it be gender violence in the form of sexual assault or physical abuse within the family, or other forms of violence that are not exclusive to women but have a direct impact on them, affect women's capacity to learn (see, for example, Marie, 1997). In consequence, while violence is generally understood as being of physical origin, i.e. an attack by one body or bodies on others' bodies, these attacks may in the long term affect the individual psyche and the collective consciousness. In turn, situations of generalized violence also affect women's ability to participate in education when the risks of travelling to classes are too great for their own physical safety. Indirect and direct violence affecting family members, particularly in the form of violence inflicted directly on male family members, has a direct impact on women's lives and, by implication, their education. Women are often widowed and have to become heads of households and assume responsibilities which they are ill-equipped to deal with, often being illiterate and without any formal schooling or training for the job market.

Finally, indirect violence in the form of structural violence has a higher impact on the lives of women. The feminization of

poverty and the concomitant health, social and economic problems present a major challenge to educators to help women to find solutions to oppressive social structures and patterns of exploitation, for without creating the material conditions for peaceful coexistence we cannot hope to eliminate the frustration, anger and sense of powerlessness that is at the root of much socially derived violence, wherever it be in the world.

The culture of violence which exists in Latin America and in other parts of the world has to do with both structural violence and direct violence. By culture of violence we are referring to those conditions under which violent behaviour is so normal as to be learned in the home, in the school and on the street, where the notion that it is natural for boys to play with guns and to simulate killing is never questioned. We also refer to the specifics of violent behaviour in different settings as being culturally conditioned. For example, in the case of ethnic violence, one ethnic group's belief in its own moral superiority may justify physical aggression towards other ethnic groups. In its extreme form, of course, this leads to notions of ethnic exclusion and even ethnic cleansing. Other culturally conditioned notions of violence, moreover, may have to do with expected behaviour towards women. Some cultures may find it normal or natural masculine behaviour for husbands to beat their wives, and would be surprised that women should resist or complain. These are cultures in which specific types of violence and mistreatment of other human beings are not judged as transgressing socially acceptable norms.

And so we return to the starting point of this discourse. Violence is a gender issue. Women are not usually perpetrators of violence, and women, despite the most adverse conditions, do not embrace violence in general as a solution. Several of the projects presented at the Melgar seminar focus their attention on gender relations, on the need to educate both men and women to understand their mis-education and reconstruct new identities as men

and women. Others focus on the remedial aspect of therapy for women who have been victimized or on legal training for others to enable them to reclaim their rights. Much research remains to be done on the communication of models of violence and how stereotypes of masculinity are created. Yet at the same time, the women's movement is already creating a new kind of civil society in Latin America. As one participant in the seminar stated: "If we were only interested in the deconstruction of women's reality, of the reality of gender relations in society, it would be a desolate situation. That is why it is so important to construct alternatives, to do what is possible to achieve a really different world" (Clara Inés Mazo López, *Vamos Mujer*, Colombia).

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SECTION 2:

GENDER BASED NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROJECTS

Chapter 6

Participatory Action Research from a Gender Perspective: a Methodology

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Corporación Vamos Mujer: ideas, strength and principles

In the field of popular education CVM has, since its beginnings, taken participatory action research as its theoretical and methodological framework. The first affinity of methodological development with participatory action research is the fact that education and training have political intent, namely to achieve social change and the transformation of the individuals involved. In our specific case, this has involved women. Our political aim is to achieve a change in the cultural order and way of thinking as well as in attitudes towards social roles and relationships between men and women. A second affinity is, as the term implies, the non-formal education processes through which people recognize themselves for what they are, in the sense that they have their own special characteristics, with their accumulated culture, experience and knowledge. By actively participating in observing their reality, they are able to read it critically, question it, reinterpret it, and construct possible alternatives for change.

In our work with women, we use a gender approach in order to examine women's particular reality, their needs and special ways of seeing and acting in the world, and from this perspective making a reading of the extensive world where grassroots women act. There are various lenses through which to look at, interpret and understand the world. The gender approach, as one of these lenses, gives us the possibility of studying and speaking of women and men, of the way society has understood what it means to be a man or a woman and of the culturally imposed values and roles that have been assigned and transmitted from generation to generation through upbringing and education. With these lenses and this perspective, we can deconstruct what culture has defined as natural in terms of behaviour and relationships between the genders, and what culture defines as "their roles" in the world in general.

The gender approach can reveal unequal gender relations, the disadvantageous situation of women, the inequality in opportunities, and the discrimination against women in all fields of life. But the gender approach, as a social and cultural construction, also helps us to unravel historical and traditional issues and to build alternatives so as to transform and modify the myths, beliefs, values and relationships between people and their ways of relating with the world, institutions and occupations, among other aspects.

In the specific case of grassroots women in the city and in rural areas, the gender approach and perspective help us to pinpoint a series of situations faced by women in particular, the tools they have used until now to face these situations, and the talents and abilities they can acquire to change their relations with and in the private and public spheres. The gender perspective thus becomes a pedagogical method and tool that enables grassroots women to research, analyse and construct new knowledge and attitudes so that they have the opportunity to change their position in the world.

In *Vamos Mujer*, while action research sustains the entire institutional methodology, it also nurtures the specific methodologies of our four areas of work: training, psychology, the promotion of organization, and economic projects. Each one of these areas responds to the women's particular needs: training, to fill in those educational gaps that women might have and to counteract the effects of a sexist education; psychology, in reference to women's subjectivity and their emotions; promotion of organization to confront all those problems that block women's organization; and economic projects to suggest profitable economic alternatives. What makes the work and intervention in these areas possible is common theoretical references such as action research, feminism, and the gender approach.

Training methodology

To plan and implement the methodology, we begin by stating what we mean by "methodology". By this term we understand the special way of working with women from the grassroots sectors, that is, how the projects are carried out and the process or methodological steps that are developed to achieve the objectives and desired results of each activity. The methodology involves a combination of basic elements at two levels which together produce the desired results. Essential elements are: wishes; institutional goals; the particular interests of those creating the methodology; and the contents of feminist thought. The elements that make possible the realization are: definition of theme; definition of objectives to be achieved; an explication of the results to be achieved; the main contents that sustain the methodological proposal; the methodological steps to be followed; the exercises, techniques, and dynamics to be used; the work guidelines; the pedagogical materials to be used; the tools to obtain results from the workshops; and guidelines to evaluate and/or follow up on the work.

By the "wishes" of a group of women we refer to their translation into political goals: goals that are our starting point and that are clearly defined in the very mission of *Corporación Vamos Mujer*: "We seek to help humanize equal relations between men and women and we seek a new positioning of women from the poorest sectors of society. We work to realize this goal by supporting women in the processes of identity reconstruction and by strengthening the women's own ways of organizing."

While all the areas start working from one and the same problem, "the social dynamic of discrimination and subordination of woman," this reality is expressed in diverse forms in women's lives and in the daily relationships they establish in the arenas where they interact. This feminine reality, of such diverse manifestations and effects, is what has led *Vamos Mujer* to build up a specific methodology through a common gender approach.

To begin to give it shape and make it concrete, we carry out the specific actions of each area or component of the work (the educational area of training; the subjective area of psychology; the organizational area of promoting organization; and the productive area of economic projects). Each area in turn has a methodology that is consistent and coherent with the search for the resolution of women's particular needs and ways to realize their strengths.

In the particular case of the training area with and for women, and specifically the *Centro Escuela de Capacitación* (School for Skills Centre) which is devoted to the field of education, we face a great methodological challenge. We constantly encounter responses in the research and systematization of our work which show that the women from the poorest sectors of society who begin training processes in this centre have a continual nagging uncertainty about their knowledge and fail to appreciate or recognize their abilities. This in turn makes them feel permanently insecure with the result that they do not assert themselves in their daily actions, either at an individual or a group level. This is

manifest in their constant fears, and in the undervaluing of their experiences, accumulated knowledge, potential, skills and talents to confront proposals and actions for changing the cultural reality in which they are socially immersed.

It is a great pedagogical challenge to provide opportunities and instruments so that women's situation can be changed and to discover, together with the women, the causes and explanations of their doubts about their knowledge and their non-recognition and appreciation of this, and of the non-impact of their actions in the public sphere. Some of the causes we have been able to identify include the following:

- the disadvantages that women face in daily life as a consequence of their socialization, education and training, both formal and informal, in which the image and model reproduced are those imposed by a culture that makes women invisible, unequal and undervalued, and that does not acknowledge the true value of, and the specificity of being, women;
- the effects of an exclusive, sexist education that trains women only in matters socially and traditionally assigned to women and that revolves around the maternal role and denies any free choice of human development that does not fit the imposed model;
- the real barriers facing women from the grassroots in access to formal primary, secondary and university education, coupled with the high percentage of women from the popular sectors who have difficulties in reading and writing or who have not even been able to learn these skills.

The School for Skills Centre has defined its goals and constructed its methodology with these issues in mind. Our methodological aim is to find key stimuli with the women, in each

one of the situations experienced every day, so that along the way they may transform the negative effects caused by their education and training as women in control of their lives.

Particular interests

The School for Skills Centre has three clearly defined interests, owing to the characteristics and spirit that the women who form part of it give to the school: two female historians, one with feminist experience, and a woman with technical experience (in zoo technology) interested in environmental and ecological issues from a feminist viewpoint.

The role of the women, as actors and protagonists of their own history, is constructed from the daily life of those who participate: their bodies, mentalities and relationships. History does not mean historical phenomena and data about heroes or important events. It is the story of daily life that brings together aspects of private life (love, sexuality, the functioning dynamic of nuclear families, the dynamics of homes and domestic affairs, individual and subjective explications of phenomena) and aspects of collective public life (including exercise of citizenship, participation in groups, organizations, social movements and employment in the labour force). The cultural diversity of this history is a catalyst for the flow of social events.

This expression of the women's movement has achieved a very meaningful and substantial theory for work with women. Its contributions cover all the social disciplines (history, anthropology, sociology, psychology and education). The area of training takes up a large amount of this work as it is an essential part of its conceptual and theoretical references. At the same time, from its own experience, development and systematization of work, it provides feedback for feminist theory on women's learning and

their access to knowledge and the processes of training and educating women.

Methodological considerations

Our starting point is that methodology develops for a particular group of people: women. Women experience a particular situation or condition that makes them different from men because they have a double identity: they are women in themselves, with a body, intellect and subconscious, and at the same time, they are a social and cultural construction. This double identity has profound implications for women, and if it were not considered in the methodology, we would be ignoring one of the essential points of our institutional goals: to help to reconstruct women's identity.

A second characteristic of our methodology springs from the exercise of reconstructing woman's identity and goes through a process of deconstructing the model of women created by culture which places them in a servile position in a structure of discriminatory social relations. In the deconstruction process, women are required to exercise their knowledge in a rational analysis involving critical questioning. The process also involves women in matters of a non-rational order such as emotions, sensations, feelings and free associations. Both components of deconstruction must be totally activated in order that a balance is achieved and maintained. Without a balance, the required result will not be achieved and there is even the danger of the women moving into extremes: women who talk and talk and get tangled up in explanations and words without achieving attitude changes; or women confused about actions and with mixed-up feelings, unable to understand, comprehend and transform.

Another element that is at the heart of this methodology is that of generating questions. Enabling each woman to ask herself about her place in the world allows her to experience a state of

discomfort in respect to the assumed historical positions. Consequently, she is activated into exploring new fields of learning, knowledge and information and into making new quests. From the moment she begins to ask questions about herself, she cannot be the same person. At the beginning of the methodological processes, the responses of the women to their questions might be exclusively of the rational or mental order, in the sense that they report social data as the only explanation of things. As they advance in the learning process, in construction and training, they begin to become involved from their very being, that is, from their profound and subjective essence.

This methodology not only generates deconstruction but also parallel processes for the construction of new knowledge. The new constructs are the products or results of the questioning. They are the responses that the women collectively think about and weave together. If we were to stay exclusively with the deconstruction of women's reality and the reality of the gender relations in society, the panorama would be desolate and anguishing indeed. Therefore it is important to build alternatives, to construct possibilities of a distinct and real world. This exercise of construction is not simple and mechanical; one has to be constantly on guard not to fall into ideal alternatives, of the order of how things should be. We must also take care not to fall into the other extreme, of putting a brake on women's dreams.

The construction of new knowledge requires that women widen their framework of explication and verification of phenomena. For this the Centre has two paths: these involve exchanging with other women their ideas and ways of seeing things, opening up to realities and information unknown to them up to the moment, realities and information that help them to widen their framework of interpretation, vision and action; and also involve simulated experiences of situations which could arise in the future and which they can anticipate in order to live them

later on. The simulations have a mirror effect. They let the women see themselves in their daily attitudes, without rational protection, and this helps them to question themselves about their traditional posture in these situations. This exercise also helps them to begin to adopt other positions, in the sense that they question those ideas that they have always had and that they can banish themselves.

The methodology makes it possible for the women to become involved from the point of view of their own particular personal life histories. It is true that one of the objectives is that women should rationalize their individual reality, stop living it and thinking of it as something unique and personal and they learn to identify themselves as social and cultural subjects within a given situation due to their gender condition. But another prerequisite is that the women examine reality subjectively and recognize in themselves what it is that makes them remain in each one of those situations where they are ignored, undervalued or attacked, and why they give in to the power that is exercised.

The processes mentioned above cannot be generated without creating the conditions needed by the women to break down their fears and resolve the painful conflicts that are involved in making this journey and this search for new horizons in the midst of ways learned during centuries which move like a pendulum between "too much disrespect and too much respect". In this context it becomes compulsory to dream, to provide symbolic environments that activate inner connections in the women: mental, spiritual, real and imaginary. The environments are a creative and pedagogical resource that help to generate in the women free associations between present data and past data and vice versa. They enable the reappearance of things that are apparently lost in the memory and that can become essential to explain social issues from personal experience and individual biography or vice versa. The symbolic atmospheres activate what simple ideas alone do not: they help to make connections, beyond theoretical and conceptual explanations.

Chapter 7

A Gender Education Programme for Women and Men

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The CEIME commitment

CEIME is a private non-profit organization that works for the protection of women's human rights and for the construction of a society based on gender equality. From its beginnings, CEIME has focused on its area of education and training, conducting training projects around gender issues. In its analysis of those sectors that urgently needed training, CEIME decided to concentrate on women's organizations, the formal education system and the National Police. For several years CEIME has worked mostly with these three sectors and one of our long-term projects has been the *Gender Education Programme*.

A gender perspective in education

Recent decades have been marked by conflicting doctrines and role models. However, a new reference point has emerged from the feminist currents of thought, like the social category of "gender", which is a perspective from which to examine the world and the society in its entirety. Debate on gender and education is only

beginning in our hemisphere. The relevance of the gender approach and the need for a transverse approach in education can be seen if one accepts that the current social relations between men and women reflect a power relationship in which man is considered the paradigm of the human and woman is placed in a position of subordination. Therefore, if we want education to effect a process of forming collective subjects, both male and female, with dreams and ideas for change, there must be the understanding that equality between men and women is possible. Up until now, the theoretical, philosophical and educational basis of modernity has not allowed for the differences between and among men and women. Gender, which assumes the differences between men and women in a framework of equality, becomes a new starting point for the education system.

The achievement of social development presupposes the challenge of a total incorporation of women in the different social spheres. Currently, it is the concern of governments and international organizations to generate conditions that allow such an incorporation. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in September 1995, established an action plan with 12 priority points. One of those points is education and training. The other eleven points, however, also involve the implementation of education policies.

The Gender Education Programme

The programme, comprising training, assessment and sensitization in gender, is directed to institutions of the education system, adolescents, mothers and fathers and women's organizations. Communication through dissemination of information on the gender issue directed towards society at large is another major component. Its objectives include a gender education programme

at the national level that, once validated, should be recognized as part of the curriculum of Ecuadorian secondary schooling.

Training through the education system aims to make participants aware of the theme and to prepare them for carrying out the CEIME programme. As the programme is conducted at a national level, it works with women's groups in each province with the objective of training multipliers and thus guaranteeing the programme's impact. Parallel to training, research projects are carried out on gender issues which propose action strategies. Direct work with adolescent men and women, rural and urban, Indian and *mestizo*, helps and promotes a real change in the construction of more equal relationships between men and women.

Specific needs

Some specific needs that the programme aims to meet include:

- developing policies that integrate the gender approach in education;
- dispelling myths and removing stereotypes that repeat and reinforce discrimination and the subordination of women and which are often transmitted through education;
- correcting misinformation about women's human rights that has the negative effect of propagating women's passivity, low self-esteem and lack of perspective with regard to their problems;
- promoting an education system that does not encourage sexist, violent and discriminatory behaviour and conduct towards women;
- encouraging the participation of diverse social sectors in campaigning against gender violence, and in changing their own conduct and ideology; helping isolated and vulnerable

adolescent women faced with problems such as sexual harassment and abuse, incest, rape or family violence;

- overcoming ignorance, incomprehension and lack of acceptance of gender studies within the education field;
- countering the shortage of qualified professionals and multiplying agents on the gender theme.

Methodology of the education and training area

The methodology of the non-formal adult education process is based on the "experience learning circle". The process begins with a cognitive experience that might be reading of written material and/or images, talks, giving testimony, observations, analysis of documents, play-acting, etc. The next step is to process the experience and thus extend knowledge through individual or collective reflections by using key questions to generate discussions in small groups. The processing includes the use of various exercises that help to link the themes dealt with in the session to real-life situations and that enrich the proposed conceptualizations. The third phase is generalization. This helps participants to visualize a wider scope of application of the newly acquired knowledge, associate it with or differentiate it from other areas of knowledge and then, in plenary meetings, to reach new concepts and conclusions. The process continues with the application of the knowledge in practice in daily life on the principle that the learning process is sustained through alternating practice, theory and practice.

Modules in gender training

CEIME has prepared a *Manual for Gender Training*, with specific characteristics for each sector of society. The manual comprises the following modules: Gender, Discrimination and Gender Violence,

Sexuality and Power, Gender and Human Rights, Women's Rights (Ecuadorian Women's Movement), Gender Violence and Emergency Aid Techniques, Prevention of Violence and the Family, and Women's Political Participation. Each module has two parts, the methodological and the content. With regard to the methodological design of the modules, each session has two strands, one synthetic and the other analytic. The synthetic strand presents the objectives of the session together with the corresponding activities to be carried out and the resources and documents necessary for holding the workshop. The analytic strand details the development of the proposed activities and describes the methodology of each session. Regarding the contents of each module, these are matched to each area studied. As for the learning techniques used, these are varied: drawings, videos, play-acting, analysis of documents, audio tapes, modelling, recreation of images, etc. CEIME has produced its own audio-visual materials that have been incorporated into the various activities used in the *Training Manual*.

Analysis of the project

Latin America has developed non-formal education initiatives with women over a long period of time although not all of these have a gender approach. The CEIME programme, however, has gender in its approach and in its content. Nevertheless, a sizeable part of the programme is conducted within the formal Ecuadorian education system, which is very authoritarian and repressive. Facing this system with a different approach has a strong impact on all the sectors involved. This impact implies that work done in the formal education system cannot be measured and that it is characterized by a constant negotiation between the actors involved. Negotiation takes place not only about the way the workshops should be held

but also about the content. It is therefore a daily challenge to arrive at a proposal for change.

Direct work with women's organizations and groups also involves great difficulties. The fact that they are women is no guarantee that they will be open to a gender perspective. The process has to pass through a sensitization to the theme, then to an understanding of the problem, and later, to a commitment. This path is not easy as we know not only from our work with women but also from our own personal experiences. On the other hand, our intervention is not neutral, it has of course an ideological bias based on a feminist position, and this attitude is adopted by all.

While non-formal education provides enormous opportunities, it is also important to recognize that in the development of our work there is no horizontal relationship, given that those who impart the training have knowledge that those receiving the training do not possess. Although our methodology is based on the experiences of those who are trained (trainees), the trainers are always seen as those who possess the knowledge.

Overall, one of the greatest hurdles in our work lies with our objective: "the construction of autonomous and empowered subjects". The construction process, however, is more complex than the definition. The process is not linear, it does not pass through a learning stage but rather through a change of attitude that first requires the recognition of an "ego" and then a redefinition of the self in an internal process. This is not achieved with recipes or with training workshops. Therefore the expectations of those trained cannot be greater than the levels of sensitization, and the trainee women cannot hope to have their problems resolved from outside. To avoid this constant concern, the workshops begin with an invitation to define the participants' expectations – and the trainers try to give realistic responses.

As the form and extent of the content are not neutral, and the work carried out has a strong impact through emotions and

feelings, one of our main fears and concerns is how to avoid a person remaining in a state of anxiety or even becoming temporarily unstructured. This involves keeping a close watch on the process of the workshops and the way in which the people participate, and once the workshop is over, giving reassurance to those who participated.

A short-term challenge is to begin a process of reflection and systematization around the notion of pedagogy from a gender approach. We believe we have a lot to say about this theme. However, our daily work often does not leave the space necessary for this reflection. We must point out that in the work we do, we have many doubts about what it means to involve oneself in sustainable development with a gender perspective. We know, for example, from our training that it does not guarantee women's economic independence, although we also know that it creates an opportunity to see the world differently and that responses to the development problem are never going to be given by NGOs but need the commitment of public policy.

Finally, we want to stress that we firmly believe that the importance of education as a system and as a process is an absolute determinant in the construction of a society based on equality, development and social justice. We believe that the efforts made in the field of education and training which incorporate the gender approach as a strategy to deconstruct the sexist, discriminatory and violent society in which we live should have the support and the goodwill of everybody. In this way, the commitment to change will be that of the entire society and should be induced through clear state policies in accordance with international commitments.

Chapter 8

Self-Diagnosis for Peasant Women

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Rural poverty from a gender perspective

Bolivia has slightly more than seven million inhabitants, of whom 50.3% are women. Poverty affects 80% of the people, most of whom live in conditions which can be described as extremely poor, while 58% of the population live in urban areas and 42% in rural areas. Poverty affects 52.6% of the urban population and 95.1% of the rural population. According to the NGO Forum at the 1995 Beijing conference, the poverty of women had increased throughout the previous ten years because of the effects of the crisis and structural adjustment policies. This in turn had led to a progressive increase in women's responsibilities and work.

Despite the fact that there has been some growth in GDP in Bolivia in recent years, both poverty and the size of the affected population have increased. The 1993 *Poverty Map* (*Mapa de la Pobreza*) points out that "poverty is associated with a state of need and the lack of goods and services required to sustain life: it is also linked to the lack of active participation in collective decisions, social marginalization, attitudes of discouragement and adherence to a scale of values that is in one way or another different from the rest of society."

The crisis in Bolivia, particularly the economic crisis, together with structural adjustment policies, has had an unequal effect on the population since those sectors with the lowest incomes have been hit the hardest. Of all these very vulnerable sectors, women are in the worst situation of all. The crisis has caused a drop in the social welfare levels of most of the population accompanied by an accelerated social polarization process in which the increasing impoverishment of most of the population contrasts with the enrichment of a reduced minority. The crisis has also emphasised particular forms of power and subordination in relations between men and women.

One of the consequences of the crisis is the acceleration of rural-urban and rural-rural migration not only of men but also of women, and including young people as well as whole families. The migration flow to the main cities has become uncontrollable since the rural population is in search of "better alternatives in life". Consequently the urban population in the period from 1967 to 1992 grew by 92%, practically doubling in 20 years. Migration also affects rural women for even those who are not turned into migrant women by moving into the cities or other rural areas, such as the colonization zones, often find themselves heading the household and being responsible for agricultural production on the family plot of land, replacing the migrant male either temporarily or for ever. For the woman who remains in the rural area, migration means solitude and work overload.

In order to survive the economic crisis, women develop various strategies that enable them to find the most appropriate ways to reduce family expenses, ensure supplies, reorganize domestic arrangements and even to perform paid work in spite of receiving less money than men do for the same job. According to the Beijing NGO Forum, women are experiencing economic growth without equity since the neo-liberal economic model co-

exists with and is a vehicle for exploitation and the patriarchal system.

Application for support from CEPROMU

Although peasant women are the pillars of agricultural production, not only on the plateaus and in the valleys of the department of La Paz but also in the country's rural areas as a whole, they hardly participate in community and local government decision-making or are inhibited by the cultural traditions of these communities. Yet, in spite of these disadvantageous conditions, they are currently the main producers in the family economy. Most units of family production are geared towards subsistence although in a high number of areas where poverty is concentrated even a subsistence level of production may be impossible. In fact, the role that peasant women play in their communities is determined by the significant contribution that they make to the national economy despite the population's ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, the major environmental restrictions that they experience and the social limitations to which they are subjected, such as illiteracy, discrimination, and low access to basic education, health and sanitation services.

Araca, where our project was started, is a municipality in the Province of Loayza, in the Department of La Paz. In this region, high in the western chain of mountains belonging to the Andes, there are five contrasting ecological zones from snow to subtropical regions, wide barren plateaus, valley heads and enclosed valleys. Land in Araca, as in the whole Andean tableland and the Bolivian valleys, is divided into plots with families owning on average between two and five hectares each although their plots of land are not always adjoining. Because of the quality of soils (types III and IV) and of the technology that is used, only 75% of this land is arable. Forty-three peasant communities live in the

Araca municipality, which has a total population of 11,500, of whom 51.6% are women. In general, peasant women live in a critical situation in these communities because of widespread poverty aggravated by male migration, which increases the women's workload.

Five years ago the men's trade union organization in these communities requested institutional support from CEPROMU. They wanted CEPROMU to present a proposal to include women in the *Araca Integrated Rural Development Plan* being promoted by the trade union organization together with an Italian NGO. They requested that the proposal should aim to identify "activities women can perform". This implied that the activities should be related to women's traditional roles such as weaving, sewing, raising domestic fowl and so on. CEPROMU decided to carry out participatory research with the women themselves in order to identify women's own needs, proposals and demands so that these could be translated into development actions and incorporated into the *Araca Integrated Rural Development Plan.*

The project

Self-diagnosis was the first step taken in the CEPROMU project and was conceived as a continuous process for creating a body of collective knowledge, by identifying, analysing and prioritizing common problems in women's everyday life, which would lead to the formulation of alternative proposals for inclusion in the *Plan.* Many of the aspects regarding women's situation in Araca addressed by the self-diagnosis matched those relating to women elsewhere in Bolivia, but there were also new elements that enabled a deeper understanding of their particular problems.

It is no easy task, and an even harder one for peasant women, to identify key class, gender and ethnic problems. Their traditional circumstances are reservation, discrimination, subordination and

self-denigration. These and other conditioning factors hinder their capacity to reflect. That is why they need an external impetus to help them to acknowledge and develop their potential. The women in Araca had had no previous experience in technical training or in trade union organization. Although in some communities they managed to organize mothers' clubs, promoted by the Church, which offered donated food and in some cases promoted sewing, weaving and embroidery courses, this experience turned out to be too limited as far as the community's demands were concerned.

There were two main objectives to the self-diagnosis: to get to know the situation of women in Araca and their problems, particularly in regard to their role as rural producers, and to identify women's proposals in order to include them in the *Araca Integrated Rural Development Plan.* The self-diagnosis which CEPROMU made was a new and unusual practice that required great efforts of concentration in order for them to reflect on their situation and needs and to propose alternatives. In spite of the methodological complexities, the women showed great interest and eagerness throughout the self-diagnosis process as they also did when presented with the possibility of training in various activities and creating a peasant women's organization representing their interests in the arenas where decisions regarding the community were taken.

Procedures

It was through participatory workshops that the methodology known as IPEM was applied to the implementation of the self-diagnosis in Araca. This methodology includes the application of play, work and learning techniques and the use of tools to compile information such as guides regarding gender division in work and women's participation in their fields of intervention as well as other techniques to collect information from interviews, group

dynamics for analysis, facilitation and recreation, key informers and direct observation. The IPEM methodology enables research with women from popular sectors as an educational process and uses tools and techniques, suitably adjusted to the women's own characteristics, for the compilation of information.

The women were notified of the action plan and convened for the self-diagnosis by the communities' trade union leaders although this procedure was, as results of the evaluation showed, not the most appropriate because not all the women were nominated. Women representing the municipality's communities met in four groups. The workshops were jointly planned and took place over three successive days. Peasant women delegates from 36 communities were the main actors in charge of drafting the participatory self-diagnosis. The local authorities, mainly the communities' trade union authorities, helped to perform the self-diagnosis. The institution's technical staff, comprising an economist, a social worker, an architect and an agronomic technician, all women, facilitated the self-diagnosis work.

The results obtained were corroborated by another workshop to which women were invited via the radio. This was a more effective procedure since a larger number of women representatives per community attended. This workshop's objective was to verify the information compiled in the workshops and fieldwork. The resulting documentation was used to systematize the self-diagnosis. The same was done with the five-year proposal and the plan for action for the first year. The IPEM methodology which CEPROMU developed during more than ten years of institutional practice allowed us to pass from intuition to a methodological conception. This process started to bring together theoretical contributions from different sources, thus enabling the comparison of the fieldwork being performed with different women's groups, mainly involving peasant women.

It is important to note the contributions made by:

- *popular education* – a new educational concept developed in Latin America and characterized by a democratic, horizontal and participatory way of being involved in teaching and learning;
- *participatory research* – an alternative research methodology in which peasant communities, including their women, are no longer an object of study but become researchers themselves. This allows the research to use democratic, horizontal and participatory forms and to become a creative process;
- *gender perspective* – a proposal identifying women's social role; it not only values women's role in biological reproduction, but also underlines the role they play not only as producers in the economic and cultural spheres, amongst others, but also as actual members of the community, i.e. as social subjects;
- *organization of peasant women* – a political approach integrating class, ethnic and gender interests in the same perspective, and transcending the constraints of paternalistic conceptions that narrow their vision and action to ethnic or class demands and thus exclude peasant women from movements, though not from mass mobilization;
- *experience with women from popular neighbourhoods in urban areas* – the starting point of CEPROMU's institutional policy. Our experience with grassroots women from popular neighbourhoods allowed us to develop a policy to support women's organizations via popular education, technical labour-force training, support in the creation of small self-managed businesses and participatory research.

IPEM/CEPROMU thus results from our institutional work in the country. Its methods are now regularly applied to peasant organizations in order to strengthen and develop those that are already constituted or to promote their creation in places where

they are not organized. The methodology has developed a process with which to create collective knowledge and identify the gender problems and needs of peasant women. In addition, it provides women with the elements of self-esteem and self-appreciation that they need to be able to participate in decisions about their own development. It is a continuous process that enables women to see the need for organization in order to meet their strategic gender needs.

Strategy of work

We consider rural women as having control over their own education, research and actions. The institutional intention is thus to identify, analyse and prioritize gender problems and needs in order to organize peasant women so that they can participate in decision-making processes in their communities and municipalities. The strategy which CEPROMU adopts is based on the active and direct participation of peasant women in all phases of institutional intervention. It starts out by accepting the request and visiting the community. Once the first agreement between the community and the institution is established, the self-diagnosis of women's situation in the community is performed. This procedure allows them to identify their most important problems, prioritize them and propose actions to solve them. With the information that is obtained, a work plan is drawn up in which the women's proposals are made compatible with technical and institutional feasibility. The resulting proposal is validated by the women and later on issued to them in the form of a small handbook that helps to socialize their ideas and proposals with the members of their families. The validated proposal translates into projects, the funding of which is negotiated with co-operation agencies. Implementation starts once the funds are obtained and is based on

an operational plan, an activity flow chart and a definition of the implementation modality.

Throughout the implementation of the project, the programmed activities are followed up through the active participation of the community's women leaders together with the members of the institution in charge of the project. This enables the relevant adjustments to be made in order to achieve the stated objectives. Periodical evaluations of the results are made via the application of specifically designed indicators. The evaluations are also participatory, which enables the peasant women to check the project's progress and identify the obstacles that have constrained or hindered the implementation of the programmed activities. Periodical evaluations enable the reorientation of the implementation of the project in agreement with the work strategy. The aim of the final evaluation is to check that the objectives have been attained.

Results

The results of the self-diagnosis include not only the products and actions that have arisen in the process of participatory evaluation, but also the development actions that have been implemented afterwards. The most significant result, however, has been the women's participation in the *Municipal Development Plan,* which includes their demands. This took place much later. Other important results of the participatory self-diagnosis made by the women have been the identification of the problems that women face in the domestic, productive and organizational spheres, the establishment of a division of family work by gender, and the quantification of the workload of each member. The length of the working day for each member of the family group has also been established. Beyond the diagnosis, a five-year plan for the

participation of peasant women in the *Araca Integrated Rural Plan* has been drawn up.

In general, these women, through their organization, have gained a space of their own where they can exercise decision-making. The most significant aspect of this experience for them has been that they are able to speak, take decisions and see the situation in which their municipality lives. For the community in general, its significance lies in the fact that it managed to understand the importance and the necessity of seeing reality through women's eyes as a complement to men's vision. This experience has raised awareness about the need to meet women's strategic needs and to implement actions to attain this objective.

Chapter 9

Gender and Development among Peasant Women

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The Institute: rationale and guidelines

This project was born in response to a strategic gender need. In the situation Peru was experiencing in 1987-1988, it was essential to know in what, how and why an institution such as ours needed to train peasant women facilitators. Serious difficulties had been observed in the proposals, practice, implementation and approach of other programmes in rural areas. Income-generating projects were being reviewed and the results showed that peasant women continued to have a large number of problems despite the programmes' good intentions. IAMAMC therefore started, with very little previous experience, by carrying out promotion among peasant women. We were aware that the national perspective we had originally intended to adopt, would have to wait for a more favourable moment. IAMAMC's members came from Huancayo (Junín), Abancay (Apurímac), El Santa (Ancash) and Huancabamba (Piura). We chose to start our work in Huancabamba in 1988 because of the situation that women were facing in that area.

IAMAMC's first guidelines and objectives referred to the need to achieve the promotion and integral participation of the country's peasant women through having the women themselves undertake direct and participatory actions in their own training and organization. These guidelines and objectives responded to the following needs:

- to contribute to the development of a non-formal education process among peasant women;
- to initiate peasant women in the acknowledgement of their gender identity as women, workers and peasants with equal rights and responsibilities;
- to train them as leaders-facilitators with technical production skills and the ability to organize other women within their family and community, and to act with assertiveness in decision-making;
- to get peasant women to overcome their subordination and to give importance to a peasant women's movement whose programme of action aimed at: the protection and enforcement of women's human rights; the improvement of reproductive health and of healthcare services; access to credit and technical assistance for the implementation of their projects; and women's equal participation in peasant, community and local government organizations.

Women in rural areas: social and economic context

Peru, particularly in the last two decades – like other Latin American countries with serious social, economic and political crises – has seen its social fabric deteriorate dramatically, which is shown in the conditions of poverty that currently affect most of the population. Since August 1990, structural adjustments and reforms to stabilize the economy have had serious effects on the most

vulnerable social sectors: children, young people, women, peasants and the marginal population living in the cities. The latest analyses confirm that: "The incidence of poverty is greater among rural populations, two thirds of whom are poor and 44% of whom live in extreme poverty. The poor in Peru mainly live in rural areas in the mountains and in metropolitan Lima" (Moncada Vigo, 1996: 97).

Development possibilities for the population over the age of six, accounting for approximately 20 million people, seem very limited as half of the population belong to the economically active population. Women, children (both boys and girls) and young people begin economic activity at a very early age, particularly in rural areas where women, in spite of their reproductive and productive work, are not paid properly and the value of their contribution to the economy is not acknowledged. The disadvantages and restrictions that increase the risk of poverty, particularly for women, are related to the scarce and low income that they receive for marketing their products and to the unequal wages that they are paid for the same work as men.

The mountainous rural area is the region that has benefited the least from the social policies that have periodically been adopted. Abject living conditions, non-existent healthcare services and a deficient transport infrastructure are among the factors that make the Andean mountainous areas less attractive for the development of productive activities and even less for investment, with the exception of mining. These areas only receive aid in the form of food, schools, and so on, in specific situations, after natural disasters or the emergence of political violence, which has been threatening social stability since 1980.

Illiteracy, together with deficient and low-quality social services, has a greater negative effect on women's circumstances: the higher the illiteracy, the larger the number of children. Family overload (6.5 children per woman) and the triple working day that

most women take on, force them to remain in a permanent state of backwardness. The lower the educational level of women, the greater the misinformation and therefore the lower the capacity to negotiate and gain recognition. The authoritarian treatment women receive from officials, leaders and their husbands restricts not only the decisions they may take within their home, but also women's organizations themselves, and this worsens this situation. It is obvious that the underprivileged still have to work on different aspects such as their self-esteem, autonomy and identity from a gender perspective. Women from rural areas and from marginal urban areas are at a greater disadvantage and are therefore affected most by the crisis and socio-economic adjustment.

The number of female-headed households is currently on the increase. The number of single mothers is also increasing as a result of early maternity and because both citizen awareness and/or respect for human rights are equally weak in rural areas. Young women between the ages of 12 and 16 are even forced to migrate so as not to become a burden to their families since their impoverished peasant economy does not allow them to make ends meet.

The project and its background

In 1988, when IAMAMC was founded, the proposal was made to design a pilot project, *Global Promotion of Peasant Women*, in the province of Huancabamba (in the Grau-Piura region). A mutual agreement was signed with one of the typical communities in the province: Quispampa. A Training Committee of Women from Quispampa was organized during the first round of training (in October, 1988). The first training and workshop-seminars held between 1989 and 1992 facilitated dialogue with the women from the community about the subordination of Andean women. These started to attract women from a variety of villages, who came to

attend the training sessions despite the fact that many of their husbands beat them up or tried other ways to dissuade them from attending.

IAMAMC, as opposed to other state and private institutions, did not offer food support to these women's groups. The participants, however, were highly motivated by the first meetings since they identified with the problems and experiences represented in the social dramas and with the experiences from other provinces that were shared. This initial motivation led to the First Meeting of Peasant Working Women in November 1990, which brought together around 300 women from the eight districts of Huancabamba. The first step these peasant women took towards leaving their seclusion was getting to know each other and joining in activities such as singing, group reflection and experience-sharing while having the opportunity to think about their needs. The commission to organize a future Association of Women from Huancabamba was made up of delegates of three large communities and representatives of the districts.

Between 1991 and 1992, the Training Commission of Women from the Peasant Community of Quispampa made great progress and even created the Central Committee of Women from the Peasant Community of Quispampa, which aimed to organize and train the women of the 26 neighbouring settlements. They began to hold assemblies and to gain organizational experience. They had their first experiences in agriculture and vegetable plots. The Second Provincial Meeting was held in January, 1993. The first board of directors of the Association of Peasant Working Women from the Province of Huancabamba (AMHBA) was elected at this meeting.

This step forward, despite taking place amidst growing political violence, allowed the *Promotion of Peasant Women* project to expand which, with the support of the Women's Institute in Spain, arranged a first level of training for peasant facilitators in

business management, radio communication, health and the environment. Nevertheless, there were some difficult times, particularly when during the period 1993-95 a series of official measures to underpin anti-subversive action was enacted, completely paralysing the peasant communities, community groups and AMHBA. Despite this situation, the women belonging to AMHBA learnt how to carry on a dialogue with the authorities and to demonstrate that women wanted peace, not violence, in the area. By the end of 1994, the emergency measures were suspended, allowing the situation gradually to get back to normal.

The project has been revised and re-orientated. It is now a *Gender and Development among Peasant Women* project and has thus recovered its true dimension. A larger-scale proposal has materialized in Huancabamba and Ancash, placing a greater emphasis on a gender perspective. The Women's Institute in Spain has once more contributed towards the continuation of the second level of training for peasant facilitators with an emphasis on reproductive health and legal rights (from May 1996 to April 1997) while an experiment in small-scale production and training has taken place in Moro (province of Santa, Ancash).

IAMAMC believes that women have been gaining organizational experience through this process that has enabled them to get to know themselves and their identities. Like women in the marginal urban sectors, they have learnt how to protect the lives of their children and the civil population by organizing a milk committee and cafeterias, by working in vegetable plots and by starting experiments in production.

The women from Huancabamba

The reference group is made up of the peasant women belonging to AMHBA and the Quispampa community. It is extremely important that a representative organization should identify with a

proposal for change that removes *macho* and authoritarian attitudes at the same time as it consolidates its learning about women's new roles. In this respect, the radio communication experiment and the protection of human rights, two initiatives which we started, were very positive examples of women achieving greater assertiveness and self-esteem. The radio programme run by the women, called *Alegre Despertar* (Happy Awakening), provides peasant women with the chance to communicate their feelings, the work they do and the experiences they have. It is produced and edited three times a week and reaches the whole province and region.

In IAMAMC's non-formal education proposal it is the peasant women facilitators and leaders who are responsible for motivating, co-ordinating, negotiating the implementation of activities and managing to get AMHBA to achieve agreement among public institutions, local governments and organizations. The idea is that women take on a new, broad way of leading and managing productive organization with conviction. Between the women leaders and facilitators, there are close to 150 women who – based on the smallest level organization, such as the club or the milk committee – are participating in the workshops and events in which experience is exchanged at a local, provincial, national and international level. It is expected that each of them in turn will multiply the technical and organizational training process. IAMAMC, its members and work team share the advances, difficulties and conflicts they have faced in this process and always stress that it is of great importance that the women themselves discover their alternatives.

Learning through seeing and doing

One of the principles of the IAMAMC team is to learn through seeing and doing, and this is applied to all the groups we work with. We believe women must first gain self-esteem in order to

overcome the fear in which they have been kept by gender subordination. They need to realize that illiteracy and misinformation divides them and separates them from their interests. The training courses must thus create opportunities so that AMHBA itself may co-ordinate a literacy teaching programme at the same time as it transforms agricultural production. The need for technical training is also considered of great importance. One of IAMAMC's main objectives is to promote increased technological knowledge among women. Training is therefore given to prepare and qualify women for the management of different businesses and of small-scale food agro-industry processes.

Once the AMHBA agricultural and school complex is finished we intend to organize a programme for facilitators to enable women to gain access to courses, workshops and projects over a period of two years. They are to receive a certificate upon conclusion. These programmes will be for groups of 30 peasant women who will later be able to share what they have learnt with their community.

Agricultural production and agricultural industries have not yet been developed in a complementary way in peasant areas. Because of the bio-ecological diversity and the potential in human, natural and economic resources existing in Huancabamba and Moro, this process may well be initiated there. Contact between women peasant facilitators and women's groups in their communities will be vitally important for communication purposes, for learning about new production methods from others and for following up any advances and/or difficulties the producers may face. Women will soon have access to small credits in order to organize and manage some of their experiments in production. It will be a challenge for them since it will enable them to establish what kinds of advantage or limitation this brings to an organization such as AMHBA. A multi-sectoral development commission has been

proposed to facilitate co-ordination with women from other sectors and particularly with institutions in their areas. If we want the peasant women and the NGO members to promote agreement and joint actions, we need to make arrangements for the pooling of ideas.

Our experience of working in education processes with peasants and women in rural areas in Peru for almost 25 years has taught us that the country is still in debt to its peasants and agriculture. Peru, however, is in even greater debt to women who, as a marginal sector with great potential, urgently need to be taken into account and no longer to be considered as victims or food donation clients, but as the main actors in their own change. Working women in rural areas therefore deserve equal treatment at all levels. Their human rights must be respected. Education, reproductive health, access to credit and the right to organize should therefore be considered a priority. To work for gender equality is a priority in places such as Huancabamba.

The Association of Peasant Working Women from the Province of Huancabamba is the result of the joint action of its protagonists: the women themselves. It has young peasant women facilitators chosen by their own community who participate in training workshops and in the medium and long-term ensure the continuity of the "gender and development" process. Because of the actions that the facilitators perform in their own settlements, there are high expectations about the new role which they may play in supporting other women in their own settlements or communities.

Most of the women participating in the training workshops, as well as those belonging to the organization, consider that the education in which they are involved is effective since they have gained self-esteem, acknowledged that they are human beings with equal rights and responsibilities and come to understand that violence and all forms of unfairness may be overcome. They state

that they were once unable to speak of their "rights", that it used to be bad to speak of "sexuality", and that it was deemed unsuitable for women to leave their homes to attend meetings. That is why these women say that they have been helped to "come out" of their previous selves.

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Chapter 10

Salvadorian Women and Feminist Theory in Popular Education

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Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida – "Las Dignas"
(Women for Dignity and Life) / El Salvador

Our beginnings and the project

Las Dignas emerged in El Salvador in July, 1990. From the very beginning, numerous workshops were held for its members that enabled the organization as a whole to approach feminist theory. Women's gender identity, their sexual and maternal experiences, paid and domestic work, and the contexts of violence, were some of the themes that were approached during our first two years of life. In 1993, the workshops that were mainly given by colleagues from other national and foreign organizations came to form part of what we called *Our Knowledge and Skills: A Training Programme with Women.*

The year this project started, 1993, was characterized by being the first year of peace in El Salvador. The peace agreements between the government and the FMLN, putting an end to twelve years of armed struggle, had only been signed at the beginning of the previous year. During the years of war, the priorities of the democratic sectors, including the women's organizations emerging in those years, were marked by the war. The first groups to make a timid approach towards feminist theory, popularly known in

Central America as "gender theory", emerged in the early nineties: reflection about feminine subordination and gender discrimination were at an initial stage of knowledge and dissemination. The years since the signing of the peace agreements have been characterized by the emergence of feminist ideas and practices first in the non-governmental organizations and later on in some state institutions.

Women in El Salvador: a gender perspective

If we understand poverty in the terms defined by the UNDP as a situation that hinders individuals from meeting one or more basic needs and fully participating in social life, then poor women prevail in El Salvador. Chronic poverty was aggravated by war and brought about extreme forms of exclusion both in productive processes and in social integration, political participation and access to opportunities. Stabilization policies did not take into account the structural adjustment programme's social cost. This social cost has mainly been borne by women since they have had to compensate for the deterioration of their family's purchasing power by doing additional domestic work to replace the goods and services they can no longer afford. The lengthening of the working day, work and responsibility overload, and restricted access to food and health services are factors that have contributed towards the deterioration of women's quality of life. In 1991, women accounted for 70% of all cases of anaemia diagnosed during the public health system's outpatients' consultations.

All indicators show that women's health is one of the most fragile social areas. It is reckoned that in 1991, 81% of maternal deaths in hospitals were directly caused by pregnancy problems that could have been overcome with better healthcare services. In 1992, however, there were only 609 maternal beds in the whole country to cover the 151,000 births per year. According to the National Population Commission, the maternal mortality rate in

1993 was 14 women per every ten thousand live births, one of the highest in Latin America. Although the primary cause of death among women is cancer of the cervix and uterus, only 14% of the female population of reproductive age have access to screening facilities. In addition to the state's lack of concern for women's reproductive health, there is a high rate of fertility among teenage girls, as shown in these alarming figures: 51% of teenage mothers are under 17; the average age of first sexual relations is 13 years; 74% of teenagers with an active sex life do not know about family planning; 60% of teenage mothers depend on a partner; and 18% depend on their parents.

Poverty is both the cause and the product of the low education levels of the Salvadorian population: the average national school level reached is fourth grade (third grade in the case of women); 30% of the population at a national level are illiterate (32% of women); and 57% of the population in rural areas are illiterate.

Employment policies do not recognize the contribution women make to the national economy or the disadvantages women face in entering the labour market. In addition, the greater limitations they face in accessing productive resources (land, credit, technical training and so on) and the fact that they are mainly located in the informal sector (55% of those working in this sector are women), have worsened the quality of life, especially in female-headed households which, in 1992, represented 29% of total urban households and in certain rural areas reached 64% as a result of the armed conflict. Women represent 46% of the economically active population and their economic participation has tended to increase during the last decade. They are nevertheless located in the worst paid jobs and in areas which demand the lowest educational qualifications and are the most unstable, and in which working conditions are precarious and informal.

Thus 64% of the workers involved in trade and 54% of the workers in the service sector are women. Women likewise

represent 67% of unpaid family workers and 62% of casual workers. More than three quarters of the 47,000 workers hired by the assembly plant industry, which had been expanding over the last few years, are also women. In urban areas, women earn wages equivalent to 72% of men's earnings but in the informal sector this ratio drops to 58%. More than 60% of the economically active urban population belong to this informal sector and its growth rate is greater among women than among men, among the young than among adults, among younger children than among older ones, and it includes a large number of people geographically displaced because of the war.

Women's vulnerability to poverty is aggravated by their work overload, a consequence of the double working day that leaves them without any time for personal development. Lower levels of education, health and leisure time have repercussions on their limited participation in decision-making processes at family, local and national level. This is shown in the number of women participating in the so-called "elections of the century", the first since the end of the conflict and promising to be historic because of international surveillance and left-wing participation. Only four out of every ten Salvadorian women of voting age took part in the elections.

As regards violence against women, there are no studies describing this reality at a national level. However, research done in 1989 among children of both sexes in San Salvador revealed that marital violence had occurred in 57% of all households. During recent years various women's non-governmental organizations that deal with rape victims and/or battered wives have started to show an increase in the demand for their services. The Attorney General's Office *(Fiscalía General de la República)* states that two cases of rape and battering have been reported every day throughout the first six months of this year. This partial data shows an alarming situation of violence that is just starting to be

recognized as a social problem. Women still do not have legal support: only one out of every ten women applying for help decides to take legal action, although the situation is beginning to change.

The institutional reforms heralded by the peace agreements have not encompassed women yet. Recent legislative changes have focused on the election system and constitutional aspects. Women are hardly considered in the new Family Code. Rape is still considered a private crime that can only be prosecuted if the victim requests and if there are witnesses; a case is very likely to be closed if the victim forgives the aggressor. Rape within marriage or similar partnerships has not been legislated against. Abortion is penalized.

In spite of the fact that motherhood is exercised under terrible conditions and that there are over 40,000 women claiming for alimony in order to maintain their children, the prevailing Salvadorian culture still sees women as only mothers (the term for women refers to their reproductive role, being also applied to she-animals: "*hembras*"). Culture, expressed through language, does not grant women a category different from their biological function. The use by women of their husband's surname is considered a status symbol. Women of all social classes and political ideologies are even proud of it. Until the late eighties it was their legal obligation. In rural areas, the birth of a baby boy is celebrated by sacrificing a hen. Women giving birth to baby girls "do not deserve a hen." Midwives have differentiated fees and charge more for their services when they deliver a baby boy. There is a strict gender division in the school system encouraged by sexist textbooks and teaching systems. Masculine and feminine stereotypes reproduced in the visual and print media and in forms of humour contribute to the fact that most of the population consider women's subordination to be natural.

It is exceptional to see women performing non-traditional jobs and trades. Only two years before the signing of the peace agreements, two women gained access to the higher levels of the judiciary. Not even 10% of the representatives in the Legislative Assembly are women. Not until recently was a woman placed in charge of the protection of human rights.

Programmes, people and strategies

The project was born as a result of the need to give continuity to the training of the members of the group so that they could take on the task of moving the work forward and of evaluating the need to create opportunities for discussion and debate with other women's groups that would allow them to advance towards the construction of the women's movement. The project consisted of seven programmes:

- *Leadership Training* in both rural and urban areas. In one year, 60 women were trained in feminist theory.
- *Technical-Methodological Training*. This programme consisted of giving workshops that would provide women with practical leadership skills such as how to speak in front of a group and writing techniques. Each workshop lasted three months.
- *Midwife Training* to raise awareness both of their ideological role within their communities and of the importance of not discriminating against baby girls at birth, as well as to train midwives in technical aspects related to midwifery. 30 midwives were trained in one year.
- *Literacy Training* addressed to women in the rural areas of the departments in which we work. 150 women were taught how to read and write. A workbook was produced as well as a post-literacy programme.

- *Education to Exercise Citizenship*, a training programme lasting three months (before the 1994 elections) and teaching the women the secrets of institutional politics. It also enabled them to analyse the electoral system.
- *Basic Gender Programme* addressed to the women with whom the women leaders work. Essential aspects of feminist theory were disseminated in different ways depending on the characteristics of the target group.
- *Feminist Discussion School*. Seminars to delve deeper into feminist theory with readings and discussions at three levels: basic, intermediate and advanced.

The training team that implemented these programmes was composed of six trainers exclusively devoted to the project, one co-ordinator, one assistant, six literacy co-ordinators, 24 literacy trainers, eight part-time trainers and a team of six part-time teachers for the *Feminist Discussion School*. Around 500 women participated throughout the project's development. Some of them did not belong to any organization and others belonged to *Las Dignas* or to one or more of the other five Salvadorian women's organizations.

To disseminate feminist theory based on women's different interests and in accordance with their occupations and the national situation involved various strategies. We combined courses, in which prescribed texts had to be read, with open workshops or talks which women could themselves choose to attend. We also held courses addressed to specific populations, such as the midwives. The main idea guiding the project was to provide the organization promoting it as well as other sectors of the women's movement with trained and knowledgeable people so that they could build up their groups by teaching them either conceptual knowledge or giving them technical tools. We set out with the idea that in post-war El Salvador everything had to be constructed from scratch. The fact that so many needs existed made us concentrate our efforts on training so that

women's action projects would subsequently have a solid foundation of women capable of giving these projects continuity, and of strengthening and innovating them.

Results and innovative aspects

In general, the project's results were successful. The different programmes had varying degrees of success. The *Technical-Methodological Training*, for example, was not as successful as the others since the women were more inclined to ideologically oriented activities. The *Feminist Discussion School*, on the other hand, was so widely accepted that the possibility of formally recognizing it as a post-graduate course is currently being discussed in some universities.

The most innovative aspect of this project was the possibility of providing a large number of women with different programmes and trying out various methodologies. Another important aspect was that the experience in all these programmes was systematized. The innovative products resulting from this systematization (proceedings, workbooks, brochures) are of current use and allow the programmes to be followed up. The group considered that the possibility of sharing such a wide variety of themes in one group was innovative in itself. In order to allow a greater degree of cohesion within the group, the work team's reflections were concentrated on the methodology. The project also gave all the members of *Las Dignas* that participated in it, at different levels and times, an insight into the broader concept and an awareness of the importance of training, as well as of its limitations.

For the actors involved, the most significant aspect of the project was to have a space in which various needs could be met in order to further their intention of strengthening the women's movement at the same time as they themselves benefited from acquiring new knowledge.

Chapter 11

The Motherhood we Experience and Want: An Experience with Working Women

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Rethinking motherhood: the project

Women's struggle for greater representation in all spheres of national life necessarily implies an exhaustive analysis of the role we play as mothers. Our interest in studying and analysing the implications that motherhood has for women emerged from the work we in GEM had been doing with various groups of women workers from the grassroots sector. We began our in-depth studies in 1993 when we started the project entitled *Rethinking the Motherhood we Experience and Want.*

The question of whether birth control and the reduction in the number of children have enabled women to enter the employment market has long been debated. The reduction in the population and changing reproductive patterns in Mexico are undeniable. Social policies and the dissemination of contraceptive methods have influenced the falling birth rate. The data, however, on the greater numbers of working women who are married and have children fail to explain the possible impact of reproductive control over the increase in women's economic participation, for it is the existence

of their children together with the current economic crisis that have forced women to look for work in order to survive.

According to the National Fertility Survey, 14.1% of households were headed by females in 1990, when an estimated 2,280,000 homes had women in charge, 63% of which were run on an income equivalent to one minimum wage or less – which indicates the precariousness and poverty of women's situation (Costa, 1994). The search for employment, however, has brought serious problems for women since it has generated friction in their family lives. Furthermore, women's increased participation in the labour force has not brought about a better distribution of domestic work inside the home. Rather, the identity of women as protectors of family well-being now conflicts with that of women as providers and breadwinners, although this was originally the man's role.

This change has also resulted in men experiencing a loss of identity, which has caused serious conflicts in families and in conjugal relations and has led to an increase in domestic violence. The idea of preserving family unity, therefore, is impossible to sustain, as long as the system of production remains unconnected with the day-to-day existence of the Mexican population. Thus, the central question is how to break the logic of a system that presupposes that because we are women with women's bodies, we are destined to be mothers, while precisely because we are mothers, our economic and political participation is undervalued and segregated. How can we continue to maintain that the future of the country is in the hands of the new generations, when these are taken care of in the main by exhausted women who face profound contradictions between their obligations and desires as mothers, workers and citizens?

This alarming situation has become even worse in the last few years, which have witnessed the imposition of the neo-liberal economic model and the involvement of the Mexican economy in

the globalization process. During the Salinas administration, it was continuously stated that reforms would benefit male as well as female workers and raise their living standards. The economic model imposed, however, as well as the rapid political decline of the governing elite following the 1994 political assassinations, have brought about a severe crisis and a situation previously unseen in the country, the repercussions of which are affecting the different sectors of the population in different ways.

Given this situation, which contrasts sharply with the illusion of seeing Mexico join the First World, we have to ask ourselves what consequences the crisis has for women and their families.

Stages, objectives and strategies of the project

Although the theme of motherhood has been studied by the *Training Programme for Women Workers* ever since GEM was formed, it was not until 1993 that it was dealt with specifically from the educational point of view. In that year, on the basis of the results of the project, this line of work was consolidated, amplified and diversified. The work has thus essentially fallen into three stages.

The first stage aimed to promote analysis and debate on the distinct conceptions that we women have about motherhood in order to draw up legal, political and social proposals. To this end we carried out educational activities such as workshops, forums and seminars, directed at various sectors of women who belong to social or local groups, trade unions, public or private institutions. We also maintained links with academic researchers to enrich our analytical framework.

As a follow-up, we then devised various materials that reflect the experience of this process. We produced a book, *Rethinking and Politicizing Motherhood*, a pamphlet entitled *Myths, Realities*

and Proposals on Motherhood, an information folder for journalists and a final report of the workshops held.

We visualized the social dimensions of the problems put forward by women about the various forms of perceiving and assuming motherhood as vast and complex. However, even given the differences in class, age, civil status, number and sex of their children, place in the labour force, level of schooling, etc., and that the presence of children in the lives of women has distinct meanings for each woman, the many complaints about excessive demands, lack of support, feelings of personal frustration and dissatisfaction were in the end expressed with one voice. Nevertheless, for those women who have less (in the economic sense) and who have been forced to redouble their efforts to increase the family income, the conflicts about being mothers and how to resolve their most pressing needs have deepened in the last few years because of the economic crisis.

In the second stage, we thought it necessary to look at the contradictions generated around production within the new economic model and human and social reproduction, this being one of women's main concerns. The objectives of this second stage were to gain knowledge about the problems which working mothers face, in the contradictory context of the country's modernization and social and economic crisis, to stimulate collective action and to define more precisely the issues that make maternity a public matter as a responsibility of business, state, trade union, society and family.

To meet these objectives we worked with three sectors: preschool and primary teachers, female bank employees and women workers in the telecommunications industry. With these groups we set up a "facilitator group" to formulate proposals which recognized the problem of maternity in each sector. For this we conducted research, at an exploratory level, to provide the necessary data for understanding the problems in each area and we

organized many meetings, encounters and forums with the grassroots workers. The process was supported by various materials to help promote discussion, organization and the development of alternatives in each sector. With respect to methodology, priority was given to women's active participation, valuing their knowledge and helping them to find their voice.

From the start the project has set out to facilitate, through various events, collective thinking in a meaningful group environment whose educational basis is the interplay of concepts, experiences, and viewpoints through which the individual "I" of each woman's daily life, history and reality could become a "we", thus rethinking the motherhood we experience and want. By making our experiences, knowledge and concepts collective, we try, in the group environment, to give new meaning to the contributions of various disciplines and approaches and to see how we ourselves are positioned in this process of both continuity and change, with its new and old identities, where new ambiguities and contradictions about the conflicting realities of motherhood are confronted. This collective construction is carried out in wider forums where other social and political actors participate so that proposals and projects about motherhood, according to the particular realities of each group of women, can be formulated and eventually systematized. The experiences, the reflections and initial proposals are then documented and publicized as part of the actions being undertaken for the promotion of women's rights. Thus, in this second stage, we drew up proposals for the reform of the Federal Labour Law, in the framework of the Second National Meeting of Women Workers, held in 1995, and two pamphlets about motherhood, one on laws relating to this question and another directed to women teachers.

The results of these two stages have been very encouraging since they have achieved wide dissemination, assisting with concrete actions and the making of viable proposals. Consequently,

we are constantly requested not only by other groups and organizations but also by legislative and government bodies to hold training workshops, to supply details of the proposals that have emerged from our work so far and to consider new projects that could help to achieve equality in family responsibilities.

Given the progress and the results of this project (1993-95), a new stage was planned for the following three years which has as its focus the motherhood-workplace relationship, in particular reproductive rights in the context of the workplace. It includes, as a priority, the design of an educational programme for women which will be available to various groups of female workers in different states, as well as action with other political groups and organizations working on this theme to see that resolutions are put into effect, such as those of the World Population Conference (Cairo 1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995).

Qualitative advances

These are some of the qualitative advances we have achieved during these last few years:

- motherhood has been conceptualized from the gender perspective;
- an in-depth study of the subjective and social implications of motherhood has been undertaken;
- an in-depth study of the economic, labour and political realities of motherhood has been carried out;
- training programmes for social organizations and trade unions have been consolidated;
- a methodological and pedagogical diagnosis of the problem has been made;

- the main legal, economic and labour proposals on maternity and women's work have been systematized;
- a survey to detect the main problems of motherhood and paid work for female workers in education and in banks has been designed;
- relationships with academics and legislators about studies on motherhood have been established;
- various instruments of dissemination to sensitize civil and social groups to the problem and the proposals have been designed.

Without a doubt, for those who have participated in this project, both for GEM and for various women's groups, approaching this theme has helped us to create new forms of organization and discussion and has permitted a closer bond with other groups and organizations.

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SECTION 3:

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Chapter 12

Women Leaders for Women Victims of War

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Women victims of war: conquering the public arena

CEPRODEP is basically concerned with the situation of those people geographically displaced by political violence, the emergency problems they meet on arrival at shelters, the need to create the right conditions for the affected population to make a recovery and the prevention and resolution of the problems that arise in this situation. What is special about our specific experience is that throughout it, and at all levels, women have been the protagonists, both in the original zones and in the shelter areas. This explains why the *Women and Development* programme was created and why the priority was to work with women.

Displaced women actively participated in the implementation of the project for it was they who had almost total responsibility for the survival of their families. They have participated throughout the whole process from the setting up of the first core groups in the settlements to the formation of the first board of directors and it was through their efforts that the first federation for displaced people in the country came into being: the *Asociación de Familias Desplazadas en Lima* (Association of Displaced Families in Lima

– ASFADEL). Later on, the women also invited men's leaders to participate.

In the second stage of this project, our aim was to respond to the situation generated in the women's original communities. Earlier organizations having been destroyed and/or severely cut back, new social actors appeared, direct victims of political violence themselves, firmly committed to the programme, with a great willingness to work and immense capacity for standing up to and responding to difficulties.

Faced with the disintegration of families, the breakdown of income-generating mechanisms and the progressive denial of security and adequate living conditions, these women – who have had to take on new roles traditionally assumed by men, such as family maintenance, public representation, heading the family, economic and productive activity, communal management and self-defence – have entered the public sphere in search of solutions. In taking on these roles, women face serious difficulties including organizational dispersal, political inexperience, shortage of technical training in productive skills and lack of knowledge about their rights and the ways in which to exercise them. This situation exposes them to further risks of abuse, frustration and political manipulation.

On the understanding that a basic condition for creating alternatives in this field is the reconstruction of the social fabric, the organization is firmly committed to building a women's movement with the aim of enabling women as new social subjects to be protagonists in this process. That is why the main purpose of this project is to promote women's transition from their traditional role, confined to the domestic sphere within the family, by empowering them to become social actors in the public arena. This could only be done by giving them the necessary tools to improve their management skills and their capacity to make proposals. These proposals are based on the two central issues that the women

themselves defined as being top priorities: the protection of life and human rights, and family and community survival. At this stage, the project's activities have focused on organizational aspects, which can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, the *Federación Departamental de Clubes de Madres de Ayacucho* (Federation of Ayacucho Mothers' Clubs – FEDECMA) was created. It now has 11 provincial federations, 1,400 affiliated clubs and approximately 80,000 organized women. It is the only organization that has an effective presence throughout the area. It brings together women from both rural and urban areas, 40% of whom have been displaced by political violence. The demand and the strategies for local, provincial and departmental management were gradually organized. Secondly, efforts were made to enable the project to be propagated in neighbouring departments also affected by political violence. The First Women's Regional Meeting was held with the participation of women's organizations from Huancavelica, Apurímac and Ica. Afterwards, these regional departments also initiated internal centralization processes. Thirdly, attention was given to the development of health, food, and income-generation programmes aimed at accumulating experience and encouraging organization. And finally, training was offered as a basic tool to strengthen the organization, enabling women to understand the situation in its regional context and their role in the organization. The training also included efficient survival management.

At this stage, the gender concept, approach and perspective had not yet been clearly incorporated in the development project. The emergency, coupled with the need to concentrate on human rights violations and the population as a whole, did not allow us to pay special attention to women's subordination, whether in the family, the public sphere or production. However, In 1992, an important stage in the history of the women's movement and of our institutional experience was reached.

The project today: reconstruction and development – the gender perspective

Since 1993, substantial changes have taken place both nationally and regionally. Political violence is diminishing. *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path – the Peruvian peasant army) has suffered a strategic defeat. Nevertheless, the emergency situation exacerbated by population displacement has become unbearable and the people, under the influence of these two factors, are now looking for alternative ways to solve their problems. One proposal is for the return of the displaced people to their communities of origin, which would bring together the three protagonists that resisted political violence: women, the displaced people and the peasant self-defence groups backed by the army.

In the framework of a pacification process, based firmly on the previous experience that had generated a series of changes in the roles that women had taken on, the women's movement focused its participation in the reconstruction and development process in their communities on concrete actions such as the creation of both jobs and incomes for women and the young, the protection and development of the population's health, education and nutrition, and support for alternatives to solve displaced people's problems and to rehabilitate and promote the development of children who were victims of political violence.

Our organization is committed to the women's movement, has taken on a gender perspective and is clear about the lack of equity and the exclusion of women. Its major goal now is to strengthen the leadership role which women play in the process of reconstructing and developing their communities by promoting changes in gender relations within this process, both in the public and private spheres, through developing their abilities and helping them to exercise their rights fully.

The Women's Training Centre

A *Centro de Capacitación de la Mujer* (Women's Training Centre – CEPAMU) was created in order to provide women leaders, through education and training, with the knowledge, information and tools to cope with the different forms of political, social, productive and personal activity and to access higher levels of social representation by exercising their rights as women, citizens and human beings. The following themes are considered to be the most important:

- *Education and training for leaders.* The aim is to prepare women who perform leadership functions to understand the local, regional and national situation, to plan and manage development and to identify their specific role in the process.
- *Business management.* The purpose is not only to develop business sense but to show women what conditions and tools are necessary for successful and profitable ventures. It is addressed to women involved or with a potential interest in agriculture, handicrafts and micro-businesses.
- *Women's rights.* The objective is to create a group of the federation's leaders specializing in the promotion of women's rights. It is necessary for them to know the rights they are entitled to, how to undertake a diagnosis of the human rights situation in the region and how to design mechanisms and strategies to exercise these rights.

In addition, non-formal education projects are organized for displaced women and those returning to their community in the Ayacuchana region based on the following methodological premises:

- The projects start from a conception that focuses on areas of local development that relate to community organization, the development of its infrastructure, the reconstruction of the social fabric and production processes, and on children's and women's development.
- They aim to improve the relationship between theory and practice, and to empower women by giving them skills that they can apply in their everyday lives. Therefore, everything taught has a bearing on organizational proposals, economic projects, and changes in gender relations, the overall idea being to construct an alternative development model with a gender perspective.

Reaffirmation of cultural values is an important element in these projects. This does not imply that the doors are closed to existing ideas which may have been assimilated by those women returning to their communities or to new stratagems introduced by outside actors that may help to achieve the goals. One of these goals is the reaffirmation of women's self-esteem, which is achieved by strengthening their gender identity and allowing them to revalue their roles in the context of change.

Topics are organized in modules starting from a basic level and advancing to a deeper analysis. Priority is given to regional issues. The women's continuous active participation is essential throughout the process from the diagnosis, the identification of needs and the drafting of the proposal to its implementation and final evaluation. Topic development is characterized by the alternate use of presentations, audiovisuals, sharing of similar experiences and commissions of participants applying what they have learnt to their own situation. The courses take place in their own language in order to guarantee greater assimilation.

Dissemination has taken on greater importance within the methodological proposal because of interaction with other actors

in the region. The contents of the training courses, in their simplified version, are broadcast by radio in Quechua. The radio programme plays an important role in the transmission of the women's proposals and experiences regarding society and the state. Dissemination also includes the production of cards displaying the content of each module in order to facilitate their reproduction by the women leaders in their communities.

The results of our experience

From the practice we have in the area of non-formal education, women leaders and grassroots activists are trained in the following themes: regional issues, women's issues, organization and management, business administration, health and nutrition. We aim to make space in the public sphere for women to be acknowledged as social actors, particularly by the local and regional authorities. Throughout this process, political participation and access to decision-making are guaranteed. Women's identity and self-esteem are reaffirmed, permitting significant changes in gender relations: there is mutual learning of roles that used to be either exclusively for men or exclusively for women, and this leads to a reduction of inequality. The federation's relations with national and internatic nal organizations and institutions have developed sufficiently to have access to resources from both the state and the private sector through signed agreements. To summarize, these achievements reaffirm the movement's presence, its identity, location and legitimacy in the public sphere in Ayacucho.

Chapter 13

Legal Facilitators School

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The Legal Facilitators School

The problems that women in Honduras may experience in their everyday lives, such as marital violence, rape and sexual assault, and those relating to alimony, show us that there is a gap between the law and reality. Most women, particularly those in the marginal sectors of society, see the law as something outside their lives and do not regard themselves as being capable of exercising their rights, let alone of reforming those laws that discriminate against them or make them invisible.

The common belief is that only legal professionals know how to deal with legal issues and that low-income people, particularly women, know nothing about the law. Furthermore, the written law and its application are permeated by socio-cultural patterns that are deeply embedded in our society in which man is the model human being and laws are made in relation to him. There is thus an urgent need to inform women about their rights and guarantees as human beings and how about to apply these to their everyday lives.

Through the Legal Facilitators School project we wish to contribute to the education of women so that they can protect their own rights and those of the women in their communities by

endowing them with legal and paralegal tools enabling them to defend themselves. The idea is, on the one hand, that in the medium and long term these women may be able to give legal orientation to the women belonging to their groups or communities and respond to specific cases and, on the other, that they themselves may run workshops to disseminate further the knowledge they have acquired. From this perspective, the idea is to prepare women as legal facilitators capable of informing and guiding other women about the national law and the rights that women enjoy within it, and willing to support them in negotiating and solving their legal problems when demanding compliance with their rights and searching for joint solutions.

To summarize, the main idea is to democratize and demystify law and search for alternatives through questioning and analysing the traditional sense of the law and its practice, i.e. to enable women to approach the law from their own specific gender issues.

The experiences

So far CDM's *Education and Sensitization* programme has held three educational courses preparing women as legal facilitators in family law and other aspects of the penal code such as domestic violence and sex-related crimes. Twenty-two women belonging to different grassroots and women's organizations from different neighbourhoods and areas of the capital city graduated in the first year, 21 in the second year, and 22 in the third year. All these newly trained legal facilitators were willing to share what they had learnt with the women in their groups.

We presented our project to various organizations working with women in order to choose the participants. Our selection criteria were that they should have an interest in the theme, should like working with women, should have a certain leadership within

their group and community and should know how to read and write fluently.

Our work with legal facilitators does not consist of training alone. We have also developed follow-up processes. The objectives of these processes are to reinforce certain themes, to reflect on new ones, to find out about the stumbling blocks which the facilitators are facing in their work and their achievements, to strengthen relations among the facilitators themselves and between them and the educators. These follow-up processes, which are carried out in both formal and informal settings, allow us to learn more about their work in order to get closer to the actors in the field and to analyse the project's development and impact. For the same reason, we also conducted a survey among legal facilitators. According to this, the work they mostly do is give legal advice to women belonging to their groups and to their community in general. The second activity in order of importance is dealing with out-of-court negotiations, the most common being legal cases relating to alimony and domestic violence, common problems in our society that reveal women's subordination and discrimination. This shows that the facilitators are doing the work they were trained for and that it is not only the legal professionals who can get to know and analyse the law.

The women involved

The participants are all women belonging to organizations that work with women's groups, such as grassroots organizations, development organizations that promote productive and training projects, religious organizations and non-governmental organizations. According to the data that we have about the general characteristics of legal facilitators, 30% have unfinished secondary studies and 40% have completed their secondary studies; of the remaining 30%, 19% did not finish primary school and 11% did.

In general terms, the level of education is not that low when compared with the national average. This is due to the fact that one of the most important selection criteria is the women's educational level since this plays a decisive role in their study and understanding of the law and in their development as facilitators in their own communities. On the other hand, this relatively high educational level is also due to the relationship which they have with their organizations, since 47% of them are either paid or voluntary facilitators, a role for which they had to train in either the formal or the non-formal education sector.

It is impressive to see the number of women who work in order to earn an income. In our case only 10% of the women surveyed depended on someone else. The remaining 90% worked as paid facilitators in the informal sector of the economy or as public or private employees. This reveals that more and more women are entering the public domain to make a living for themselves and their children besides doing the housework and performing tasks related to community organizations in other parts of their working day.

The focus: education and gender

The need to introduce a gender approach in formal and non-formal education is increasingly obvious. School is a sphere of socialization that defines and reinforces sexual roles for both men and women. The patriarchal system uses books and study materials as elements to reproduce and reinforce its way of thinking and acting. It is therefore necessary that the state commit itself to making social policies, particularly education policies, aimed at eliminating the masculine and feminine stereotypes and questioning the power relations established between the sexes that harm society. Civil society requires the promotion of projects that take into account

women's situation, their interests and needs apart from teaching women about their rights as female human beings.

There is a close relationship between education and gender since gender permeates and crosses all educational institutions and can influence the attitudes, values and behaviour of men, women and children. We believe that working with women in the field of education from a gender approach is in itself an innovation in any project and even more so in the case of the Legal Facilitators School. In approaching law from a position of subordination and poverty, women may grow as individuals and come to feel that they are equal members of society and able to exercise the law. Hence the project seeks to implement an alternative use of law by questioning and analysing its traditional values and its application by the judicial authorities.

Chapter 14

Rural Women as Actors in Development: The Training of Leaders

Irma Estela Aguirre

Centro de Estudios de Desarrollo Rural – CESDER (Rural Development Studies Centre) / Mexico

Support for peasant women: the project

The educational experience which we describe here is a three-year collective effort by a group of counsellors of rural women, *Comaletzin* (Interregional Feminist Rural Co-ordination), including two from the Support Programme for Peasant Women, *La Higuera*, of the Rural Development Studies Centre. The *Comaletzin* counsellors, who also form part of the National Network of Rural Counsellors and Facilitators, work directly with organizations of rural women, both *mestizo* and indigenous women, in different parts of Mexico – Sonora, Colima, Morelos, Puebla and Chiapas – and have more than ten years' experience in this sector. *Comaletzin* provides for study and theoretical and methodological research to improve and professionalize the work carried out in our field. In addition, we offer a *Training Programme for Rural Women Leaders* to other groups besides those we directly counsel. The urgent need to advance the process of autonomy and to improve representation and communication between groups, made us see clearly the need to train and strengthen both leaders and middle-level group members among

the women. This was the need from which the programme originated: to strengthen women's leadership in achieving self-empowerment and autonomy.

Identity of the peasant women and their own development proposal

A clear and self-created conception of development is needed ever more urgently to direct the work we undertake as women and to know what we are aiming for. Ours is essentially a central idea presented in a series of topics that generate practices and concepts that have the potential to transform the situation of women, including peasant and indigenous knowledge, technology and quality of life, through which rural women can strengthen their identity and discover their inherent abilities to change and to propose change, for society and for themselves.

This development proposal lies within a physical, social and cultural framework that itself needs to be analysed so that material and human resources and their potential use in terms of profitability can be discovered. The theme is therefore a difficult one, bearing in mind the excessive exploitation that can exist in situations of extreme poverty. We are convinced, however, that both women and men can perceive this possibility and propose alternatives in the use of resources that will give them a measure of sustainable development.

Meanwhile, independence and autonomy of women's organizations necessarily mean developing skills and acquiring conceptual tools that will enable them to design, carry out, follow up and evaluate the projects they direct. These skills and talents become increasingly diverse. We have observed women carrying out projects to improve both their economy and their well-being, and have noticed that their needs range from accounting and other

administrative matters to specific training on issues such as health and nutrition.

Gender analysis has made us aware of practices that expropriate women's bodies through diverse controls operating through cultures, religions, families, morals and state policies. To create an opportunity for reflection on this matter, to define what the basic knowledge of the body should consist of, and to develop skills that help us to advance its appropriation are also fundamental objectives in this search to empower women and to promote greater equity between men and women.

Finally, we are also aware that while both indigenous and *mestizo* women in rural areas have their own development proposals to make, we must not lose sight of the whole picture but should see ourselves as citizens with proposals, representation and forms of participation both for women and for all of society. These basic proposals and policies for seeking forms of participation and representation for rural women, to build power from within ourselves, with and for ourselves, are what we wish to design.

Objectives and priorities of the programme

Comaletzin aims to help build power and autonomy for women and their organizations, in their search for a stronger position in dialogue and in negotiations with those in positions of power and with governments so that they can fully participate in the development they propose. To achieve this objective of the programme, there are four main areas to be considered from the gender perspective in the rural indigenous sector:

- *Appropriation of the environment* – so that the participants may reconstruct their vision of their natural, physical and social surroundings and discover not only the impact that they have as women in this environment but also the impact that

environmental degradation has had on their health and on the health of their families. By considering their gender role, they can find alternative ways of confronting this problem.

- *Follow-up development projects* – so that participants in the construction of a development concept designed according to their needs and interests as women and as indigenous people can possess the theoretical tools and develop practical skills to continue the project at the local and municipal level.
- *Reproductive health and sexuality* – so that through the exchange and analysis of their experiences as women, they can deepen the understanding of the body and sexuality so as to initiate a process leading their appropriation.
- *Consolidation of citizenship of rural and indigenous women* – in order that the participants know and have the tools to defend their rights, both productive and reproductive, and as citizens in general, which will help them to draw up political proposals to ensure more equal relations in their families, communities and municipalities.

Participants

Over 14 groups, and more than 30 women from these groups, have participated in the programme so far. Leaders from three groups from the state of Oaxaca have also taken part. These three groups, composed of Mixe Indians, all run community development projects involving supplies and food. Four groups participate from the state of Puebla, two of Nahuatl Indians and two of Totonac Indians. Three of these organize handicraft projects and all four have community development projects on matters such as health and nutrition. Of the four, at least two have a gender perspective and they have made some progress in an innovative search in their organizing practices, in certain economic projects and in agricultural production. The other groups have also concentrated their

efforts on improving living conditions and community development: several are making and selling handicrafts, and some are exploring the area of human rights.

At the moment, the majority of the leaders are aware of the gender perspective and can handle certain elements of analysis related to this. We believe it is fundamental, however, to deepen their study of this issue because, while it is true that the women have gained a lot in experience and in analytical ability, it is also true that generic conditions make it very difficult for them to find space for self-development and to regard their own interests as being something apart from those of the family.

Methodology and results

We believe that informal education for rural women has been characterized by improvization, empirical practices and a lack of concrete results. Often women obtain information and training at the cost of repetition and long years of work. The experience of *Comaletzin* in training leaders and facilitators, added to the educational experience of some CESDER members, has led us to make a methodological proposal that aims to combine awareness development with efficiency in the projects undertaken by rural women. We need to achieve the best results linking theory and practice permanently, not only in the old sense of popular education, but also by contributing serious and up-to-date theoretical elements, as in the development of specific skills in the women participants, credible skills that can be seen.

Each workshop for leaders deals with one of the four main areas that make up our programme, always from the gender perspective and always focusing as much as we can on the ethnic experience of the participants. Apart from a first examination of the theme through a discussion of the problem with the women, we provide theoretical elements for analysis with materials that are

worked on both in the workshop and afterwards. A practical session follows for the development of specific skills, a development that will be complemented by actual practice in the leaders' daily work. In this way and through their own private study they can acquire knowledge in all four programme areas at the theoretical and ideological level and in practice and skills.

Besides the skills specifically required in each of the four main areas, we assist those who have to carry out a role as educators and communicators, and we practice group dynamics and encourage active participation in each workshop to firmly consolidate this function in the leaders. This presupposes a long-distance follow-up through reports from the leaders, or through visits and consulting where possible. Participation in the workshop as well as the private study activities and the development of practice all form part of the evaluation of each workshop. We expect each workshop to finish analysing its theme and content independently of the others so that the women can attend the first, second or third workshop independently of the others; to obtain the diploma, however, the leaders must participate in all four workshops.

Although it is too early to evaluate the project, at the moment we can observe permanence and continuity of the 14 groups although the leaders rotate fairly regularly. The very definition of the four areas of work can also be considered part of the results, as the theories propounded by the counsellors and the workshop practices are the things that have enabled us to define the dominating themes and generate a definition of the problem and possible actions with rural women and especially with their leaders. Methodologically, we also have results that we have yet to systematize, especially in defining the profile, functions and training needs of the leaders, physical work and power.

Innovative aspects

The proposal of the four thematic points is in itself a methodological contribution in as much as it facilitates women's potential for change and their capacity to lead, and incorporates the theory and proposals of the wider women's movement over the last few years. In reference to the teaching-learning process, the methodology of the packages has enabled us to concentrate with greater clarity on the skills to be developed in each area and to use appropriate materials and activities. This, in itself, is helping us to know more about the learning capacities of the women we work with. The definition of skills and talents to be developed is forcing us to see more clearly what is possible and what is not possible, and how far these women can go, and at the same time makes the design of intervention activities in practice and private study more adequate and effective. The materials, although they are few at the moment, can also be considered innovative, as they combine at least two characteristics that we consider prerequisites: accessibility in terms of language and writing, and economy, so that they can be reproduced according to the needs of each group. Finally, we believe we have contributed training techniques for the four points, especially in the area of reproductive health and sexuality.

What follows is of course a commonplace observation, but it is nevertheless true: women value above all the opportunity to share their experiences, talk about their work and learn about the world of others, to express their doubts, uncertainties, achievements and feelings. In their own words: "we learn a lot," "we realize more and more how much we need training," "we feel encouraged and now we have courage." And of course, they also have in mind the possibility of creating networks of support and exchange in specific areas – for example, in the sale of their handicrafts.

Chapter 15

A School for Grassroots Women Leaders

Ana María Robles

Fomento de la Vida
(Promotion of Life – FOVIDA) / Peru

Background

FOVIDA started a systematic and permanent training scheme in Peru in 1992-1994 which eventually gave rise to the *Escuela para Dirigentes Populares* (School for Grassroots Women Leaders). The School proved to be innovative because it promoted leadership by popular leaders in an adverse context, characterized by a growth in political violence in the popular districts in Lima that questioned the work these women leaders did and even made attempts against their lives. In this context of organizational weakness, generalized fear and a decrease in educational opportunities in these districts, we tried to make our education project feasible by providing training in a place that was some distance from the violent areas and by inviting leaders from all over the metropolitan area. This strategy proved to be successful and managed to bring the women leaders together in spite of the dispersal they were experiencing.

Education, innovation and gender perspective

The School's aim of promoting leadership skills among the grassroots leaders corresponded with our desire to favour women's leadership in a context in which there are different forms of discrimination against women. The fact that they were also poor women meant enabling this social sector to access new learning opportunities. Knowing, however, that working with women did not necessarily imply adopting a gender perspective, we proposed an educational perspective that would develop leadership skills and attitudes. This, we believed, would help these women to broaden their perspectives of personal autonomy and improve their performance and democratic participation in public affairs in which women were a minority. Not satisfied with merely promoting women's participation in these areas, we also considered it just as important that the women leaders themselves should innovate mechanisms or forms of democratic participation and include a gender equity perspective in their view of development.

In general terms, working in the education field means providing the necessary challenge to develop the inherent learning capacity that all humans use in their constant interaction with the world. This is the meaning of our proposal in the broadest terms. Our aim therefore is to promote human learning capacity which, according to specialists, is expressed in four dimensions. One is the cognitive dimension, which allows the subject to come into contact with the world at an emotional and conceptual level. Next comes the critical, reflective dimension, which places us in an ideal world as we ourselves sense that to be. Ethical, religious or ideological interactions are included in this dimension. The constructive dimension comes third. This refers to the interactions that enable the subject to make or construct her world: the tangible and intangible things or ways of doing things. The resolution dimen-

sion comes fourth and alludes to the set of interactions which the subject activates in order to transform her objective world.

It is this learning capacity, expressed in all these dimensions, that we intend to develop in our training programmes with the women, who have been recognized for their leadership in grass-roots organizations. This conception guides the action of the School for Grassroots Women Leaders. It was conceived as a space for interaction in which women would develop their learning capacity via a pedagogy that includes the following approaches:

- *Gender approach and social dimension.* This approach invites us to face the gender perspective as an open, experiential learning process that makes sense and in which meanings can be exchanged and skills and competencies developed. Thus a gender pedagogy becomes innovative in regard to the ideology of the gender discourse. We also acknowledge the importance of the social dimension in women's adult education. To this end we identify a particular context such as that generated around survival organizations and their female leaders' training needs. In contrast to previous training experiences, which were based solely on the subjects' social functions, we now intend to concentrate on matching each individual to the function they take on in a community. In order to determine the social factor in education it is necessary to have a knowledge of the person being trained so as to identify his/her skills and educational requirements. That is why we carried out a diagnosis with a sample of 370 female leaders to ascertain their leadership attitudes and aptitudes, learning styles and the extent to which they understood leadership functions.
- *Technical rationality.* The technical rationality of any training process must be considered as important as that of any other social intervention aimed at transformation. This is a challenge as it involves great creativity in producing the methodological

and educational tools for what is actually a permanent, never-ending process which we therefore find difficult to define in terms of a specific time and space.

Educational profile

Since we were offering systematic, consistent and contextualized training, we were led to work with the different components of the education process, such as diagnosis, educational profile, methodology, materials, and evaluation. The creative construction of the features of an educational profile was the most innovative aspect in relation to our previous institutional experience. This process involved considering the results of the leaders' leadership diagnosis as well as the guidelines of the objectives. In contrast to the previous experience, however, in which we considered the gender perspective as a module that should be developed separately, this time we included it as one of the features of the educational profile.

Learning achievements

The profile designed presents the learning achievements in both personal and functional areas. In the personal area, women are expected to reinforce their processes of personal autonomy with particular emphasis on subjectivity. They are encouraged to develop and value a more positive perception of themselves, to acknowledge and process the feelings affecting their health and sexuality, to understand their need for space of their own, to identify strategies leading to more equity in domestic tasks and to exercise self-diagnosis as a prevention against illness and for their own well-being. As far as the functional area is concerned, we distinguished between skills for strategic planning and skills required for decision-making in different areas of leadership management. In respect to the former, the women leaders are

expected to develop techniques for the investigation and analysis of the objective world as well as learning how to discriminate between the activities and the achievements they are seeking. In the area of leadership management, the women leaders are expected to develop their organizational skills and to define policies to manage business initiatives and participation in community healthcare services and nutrition schemes. The women will likewise enrich their understanding of the gender perspective by reflecting about women's rights, acknowledging gender equity criteria in consumption patterns (particularly relating to food), developing criteria to evaluate the cost/benefit of women's participation in business initiatives and identifying strategies to value and visualize the work done by health facilitators.

Learning activities

Proposing a sequence of individual and group activities proved to be a significant innovation. We confirmed that personal work facilitates women's learning and consolidation process whereas group participation provides motivation and the opportunity to share experiences, exchange opinions and reinforce behavioural changes. Another important innovation was to include educational techniques in the sequence of activities which benefited mental processes, aided concentration and revealed areas of subjectivity such as intuition, creativity and assertiveness.

Conclusion

The School for Grassroots Women Leaders offered citizenship, business, food and health management programmes from 1995 to 1997. These programmes comprised three courses, two of which, *Women's Health* and *Strategic Planning*, were common to all. The third one was different for each programme depending on its

content. Thus, the *Citizenship Management Programme* developed the following courses: Juridical Recognition of Social Grassroots Organizations, Business Management, Business Challenge, Food Management, Food Education, Health Management and Community Health. Eight 72-hour programmes were implemented in 1996 with the participation of 283 women leaders of the *Cafeterias* and *Glass of Milk* organizations and mothers' clubs in popular districts in Peru.

The women strengthened their autonomy and development, their understanding, analytical abilities and problem-solving skills both in relation to their personal lives and to their lives as leaders. They also broadened their vision of the future and of development from a gender perspective. We believe that because these women developed trust in themselves and leadership skills through these training programmes, they will be able to participate more fully in public life. We also consider that their advances in autonomy will help them to exercise their rights as citizens and that their improved understanding of the proposal for social equity between men and women will guide them in the construction of a democratic political community.

Chapter 16

Peasant and Indigenous Women's Social and Political Participation

Vivián Gavilán

Norte Mujer
(Women North) / Chile

General background

This project started in 1987, first as a sub-project of NGOs in Santiago interested in the problems which peasant and indigenous women face. In 1989, it joined the *Social Promotion Programme* of the Andean Studies Workshop in Arica. In 1992, it became one of the projects of the *Unión de la Mujer de la Corporación del Norte Grande* (Norte Grande Women's Union) in the same city. It has now officially joined this institution. The different socio-political and institutional contexts in which it has worked have influenced the design, implementation and results of its social promotion initiatives.

There is a great difference between working under a dictatorship and under a democracy in a mixed institutional context, particularly where the issues of women and gender are concerned for these have not always enjoyed the status they can expect to be accorded today. A common feature of these different periods, however, is the dependence on resources supplied directly or indirectly by international co-operation agencies, which are vital for our activities.

There were three phases in the project's development. In the first we established our two main objectives. One of these was to support the initiatives of local institutions in rural areas so as to create alternatives to the state centres for mothers which do not acknowledge cultural differences and are aimed at winning political support in a territory going through geopolitical disputes. The other purpose was to place the Aymaras, in general, and women, in particular, on the stage as actors in public life in Chile. Different groups were thus created around handicraft production and marketing through a participatory methodology which acknowledges different concepts of the time, aspirations, technologies and ethnic components in both national and Andean contexts. Audiovisual techniques, booklets, technical courses and encounters with indigenous women and squatters were among the activities that were used. As a result, the income of the women and their families was complemented, ethnic and gender identity was revalued and the existence of a new social actor in the region, the Aymara woman, was recognized.

In the second phase, our work was geared to strengthening different rural associations and to creating new ones in Arica in support of the various organizations which were wanting to improve their income via productive and commercial ventures and to continue strengthening their personal development. During the third and last stage, our intention was to train women leaders and create networks to facilitate communication between the different organizations. Access to information would, we hoped, further the empowerment of Aymara women, thus enabling them to have a greater presence at the different levels of power. It is our belief that we should use whatever resources we have to promote greater social and political participation so that these women may both articulate their problems and participate in putting forward action strategies to solve them.

Diagnostic elements

The Aymaras in the north of Chile are one of the country's largest indigenous groups, numbering around 35,000 with some 20,000 living in cities. Ethnic issues have become relevant at a regional level since there are several cultural groups, such as the Aymaras, whose social and cultural systems are related to local forms of organization in which factors such as language, history, personal and parental attributes come together to form ethnic cohesion. These features have been seen as a problem for national integration with its implied need for the state to assume an ethnocidal cultural policy. The state's interest in controlling the national territory was demonstrated through the deployment of police and military detachments in the provinces, enabling them to control the historical relations between Aymaras occupying neighbouring ecological areas in different countries. National integration also implied bringing the population under the rule of national law and regulations. The national schools and other educational agents are promoting a national homogenization process. It is only recently, with the arrival of democracy, that the indigenous peoples are slowly starting to be acknowledged. This has allowed the Aymaras to acknowledge themselves as such and to achieve a certain degree of social participation.

Although both the movement for ethnic rights and the existence of the *Corporación Nacional para el Desarrollo Indígena* (National Corporation for Indigenous Development – CONADI) have helped to put the acknowledgement of cultural differences on the public agenda and have raised awareness of the need to devise differentiated social policies, this sector's empowerment process is still limited. The non-indigenous organizations in the rural areas in our region play no part either in the design or the implementation of programmes geared to solving their problems. Women are even further away from participating in decision-making. They are

in a complex situation since neither the state institutions linked to rural areas nor organization representatives and leaders have yet valued the need to include gender analysis in their diagnoses or in their problem-solving strategies. Official figures point to the Tarapacá region as one of the three regions in Chile with greatest income inequality, with a high percentage of the population in a situation of poverty in which women are obviously at even greater disadvantage.

Statistics show that the measures the government have taken have benefited men most. In 1992, 51.7% of the indigenous population were women. By 1994, this percentage had increased to 53.3%. Although the poverty rate has decreased in the same period, the rate of decrease is less for women: 6.7 percentage points in the case of men and 4.5 percentage points in the case of women (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*/National Women's Service, Santiago, March, 1996). The advances which women and their organizations have made in productive workshops, economic associations, cultural organizations and work co-operatives have provided experience of organization which they did not have before. Their presence in arenas of power, however, can hardly be considered significant. CONADI figures reveal that there are 53 Aymara organizations, of which only 17% are represented by women (nine cases). Most of these (five cases) represent handicraft organizations, three are indigenous associations and one is a cultural association. The emergence of leaders capable of stating their demands and of creating opportunities for dialogue with the state and achieving better levels of participation thus takes on greater importance.

Several years of support for women's organizations and leadership training have started to strengthen women's socio-political participation. This must now continue within the country's current historical context. We therefore intend to guide our actions towards a better way of making the theme our own, and to

achieve more female presence at decision-making levels and women's participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of social policies addressing women. This means creating opportunities for them at a local, regional and national level.

Project rationale and description

Some organizations now have women leaders who have started to place women's issues on the local agenda. They face many barriers, however: male leaders' lack of interest and willingness, lack of concern among the state organizations linked to rural development, misinformation among rural indigenous women, and lack of resources to promote more dissemination and greater and better participation. The creation of networks of organizations has thus been proposed with the idea of involving both rural and urban women in order to help peasant and indigenous women to gain greater presence in the region's civil society, and of generating a movement permitting citizens' control over political commitments and the improvement of women's quality of life.

The main purpose of the project is to promote greater social participation by Aymara women by:

- transferring information from current social programmes, state and NGO activities related to the theme, and networked actions to further citizens' control of the commitments signed in Beijing;
- linking the various organizations existing in the three provinces involved;
- linking Aymara women from rural areas with organizations in other regions;
- integrating Aymara women into the work team that will develop the actions in order to gain more influence in the management of social projects;

- disseminating information about the situation of the region's rural indigenous women; and promoting women's political and social participation in order to have the capacity to intervene in policies to improve quality of life.

The following specific objectives have been formulated:

- to encourage women's personal and collective development;
- to promote their participation in events and networks organized by women's organizations;
- to promote the linking of the different women's organizations through networks;
- to train and prepare leaders to facilitate the process of women's organization and to open up dialogue with social development agents;
- to diagnose women's situation and analyse the social policies defined for the region;
- to sensitize state and private organizations associated with regional rural development.

Areas of work

- *Training.* The purpose of this is to help train women in matters relevant to their personal and organizational development. Designed for leaders and women in charge of grassroots groups, it consists of a modular programme of topics considered necessary for better collective functioning and improved interaction between development agents, and it uses suitable teaching instruments.
- *Promotion.* This is defined as the area that channels financial support devoted to linking and consolidating networks of organizations. It specifically refers to financing: 1) partici-

pation in events; 2) self-training in other fields; and 3) meetings and visits among peasant and indigenous women.

- *Research.* This embraces diagnostic studies of women's situation in the area.
- *Actors.* Some of the main actors are Aymara women leaders living in Arica and rural communities who lead productive and cultural organizations; Aymara women participating in indigenous organizations; Aymara men leading the indigenous movement; government staff working in this field; peasant and indigenous women's organizations in the centre and south of the country leading rural and indigenous women's claims at a national level; and both Aymara and non-Aymara project co-ordinators.
- *Activities.* All activities as a whole are considered a dynamic process involving both co-ordinators and Aymara leaders as well as grassroots women. Both training and promotion are geared to the women, focusing on information about the situation of indigenous peoples, indigenous women and the poor in general. Information about private and state organizations at different levels, resources available and ways of accessing them is also given. This is called personal development as it aims for higher self-esteem through acknowledging ways to discriminate positively in favour of gender and ethnic identity. Specific workshops are held in which project design and other negotiation tools to use with development agents are taught. As far as research studies are concerned, the results are organized and used in the training modules and at workshops, for evaluation, reflection and information transfer.
- *Principles.* The main principles sustaining the project can be summarized as follows. The Tarapacá region diverse socially and culturally, with an intercultural history in which different ethnic groups in different positions of power converge. It is located within a national context in which the national and

regional capital cities are the centres of power. Although most of the groups share a Western way of life, the form in which they claim ownership over it varies. The project's actors are social subjects. The educational challenge is to implement methodologies promoting women as subjects with independent opinions of their own, and this is reached through processes and not through project deadlines.

Results

Women from different organizations have made advances in acknowledging their ethnic identity, which makes them value difference. This has led to an improvement in self-esteem that has facilitated their wish to share their experience with other women.

The Aymara women now have greater capacity for being represented at a regional and national level. Six provincial women leaders have started to demand that the gender theme be included in the work which CONADI does and in the *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (National Women's Service – SERNAM). They are now asking to be allowed to participate in the rural and indigenous women forum which SERNAM has proposed. Their participation in workshops with non-indigenous women has helped them to recognize the problems that they have in common and to forge alliances to demand their rights. It has also encouraged a debate between leaders aspiring to directorial posts who hold different views on the issue.

Women leaders have acquired the knowledge and the improved capacity for social work and the appropriate methodology for project design and implementation. They have informed themselves about the different levels of participation that have been opened up by both the state and NGOs at a national level in order to promote the *Plan for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women* drawn up by the government.

Women have made advances in linking different organizations. Project design and implementation improved rapidly once the Aymara women were included in the design and implementation of actions. Furthermore, they have more information regarding the need for the gender theme in development diagnoses and strategies. A first regional diagnosis of Aymara women in Chile has started to be disseminated among the organizations throughout the state. There is now a debate about the need to rethink the family as the target of policies. The topic of indigenous women has been introduced into regional public debate.

Innovative aspects of this experience

Although participatory diagnoses had been made before the Aymara women joined the project, the Aymara women had not participated in designing and implementing activities. In time, this form of participation has been achieved in different activities with the result that both sides have learnt something. For the women it meant starting a new stage of leadership. For us it meant learning what was the most appropriate way for the women to take over the ownership of project goals and methodologies. Encounters with indigenous women from other Andean zones helped in the exchange of methodological experience and in reaching acknowledgement not only of ethnicity but also of the problems women have in common as gender subjects *and* as indigenous women. Participation in events with non-indigenous women involved informing people about the situation of indigenous women in the region and about respect for ethnic, political and religious diversity. Both peasant and indigenous women, and development agents, learnt from each other at their various encounters. The latter acknowledged the social, economic and cultural problems which the Aymara women experience and the Aymara women acknowledged the degrees of misinformation that exist among the

institutions and the projects with which they are associated. The participation of Aymara women in events in Santiago involved acknowledging their organizations' current struggles and seeing the need to disseminate their problems.

SECTION 4:

HEALTH

Chapter 17

Family Leaders for Health Development

Angela Rocío Acosta
(CIMDER - Colombia)

I hear your heart beat in the shadow
enigma in the form of an hour glass
sleeping woman
Animated space, spaces
Anima mundi
maternal material
perpetual exile from herself
and perpetual fall into her empty belly
Anima mundi
mother of all the errant races
of suns and men

Octavio Paz, *Viento entero*

The Colombian context seen from a gender perspective

Colombia is discovering that diversity is wealth. The romantic viewpoint, usually a privilege of anthropologists, that sees ethnic and cultural minorities as worthy of appreciation and conservation, is now a national one (ICAN, 1992). The 1991 Constitution recognized the compatibility of forming a national identity at the same time as recognizing cultural, ethnic or regional diversity. In

a country where a vital present is leaving behind the shadows of intolerance and producing a multi-cultural, inter-cultural and trans-cultural society, we need to introduce the concept of gender into the process of rebuilding citizenship. The apparent limitation that sees this concept as two sides of a coin could be transformed in its social expression into the most wonderful of diversities and the greatest of riches, namely those shown by men and women because they represent the feminine and the masculine. But the gender coin is in fact asymmetrical for there are banknotes of higher and lower denominations: history shows us that the distribution in Colombia has given cents to women and pesos to men. This is why the famous statement of Joan Scott is so relevant: "Gender is a constitutive element of social relations, based on the differences that distinguish the sexes, and gender is a primary form of meaningful relationships of power" (Scott, 1992).

The remaking of citizenship on the basis of the gender concept involves studying relationships of power in Colombian society. Women's increasing literacy and their entrance into the labour market have not corresponded with increased earnings or with skilled productive employment. Women are still earning in cents. However, in the field of identity, the perception of the woman of 20 or 30 years ago, who looked after the children and the home and who was the faithful companion of her husband, has undergone changes in Colombian society during the last few years. Feminine identities and, of course, masculine ones as well, have changed significantly today, in comparison with the society of two or three decades ago (according to Urrea, 1994).

Nearly half (45.6%) of the Colombian population live in poverty. Thirty per cent lack water services, especially in the urban slums, 53% have no sanitary waste system, 83% dispose of their garbage inadequately, and 8.7% of babies born are under weight while malnutrition in pre-school age children was estimated at 11.9% in 1990. The infant mortality rate in the poorest groups is

61.5 per 1,000 live births and in the poor groups 56.3 per 1,000. In comparison, the rate is 60 per 1,000 for women with little education and 11 per 1,000 among women with higher education (Londoño, 1995).

Fertility in Colombia has gone down from six children per mother in 1965-66 to 2.9 children in 1990. Figures from 1990 also indicate that 40% of all women and 66% of those women living with men were using contraceptives. In that same year surveys reported that 60% of children were desired, 15% of the mothers said that they would have preferred a later pregnancy and 19% of the pregnancies were not wanted. Although the number of adolescent mothers fell from 14% to 10% in the years 1985-90, poor and uneducated adolescents appear to be the groups most at risk. The maternal mortality rate declined from 19 per 10,000 live births in 1975 to 10 per 10,000 in 1990; this nevertheless places Colombia among those countries with high levels of maternal mortality. Furthermore, the causes of this mortality have not changed: toxaemia, obstetric complications, abortions, haemorrhages and infections. Abortions account for 25% of this maternal mortality, a figure that reveals the terrible social conditions behind this practice (Londoño, 1995).

Although men have always had a higher participation in the labour force than women, the proportion of working women rose from 32.3% in 1985 to 49% in 1996. This increase in numbers, however, has not been accompanied by an increase in quality and women are still earning much less than men. In 1985, 66% of the female labour force in the four main cities in the country were working in unskilled jobs, earning only a third of the income of qualified women workers and 65% of the average income of all male workers. Expressed in units of the minimum wage, these women workers received 0.95%, and 45% received less than half the minimum wage, and therefore 85% of them were looking for extra work. Levels of unemployment among women are always

higher than among men. Female unemployment in both the urban and the rural sectors is nearly double that of males. In periods of recession and increasing unemployment, women are the first to be affected by the crisis (according to Patiño et al., 1988).

Female-headed households increased from 28% of the total in 1987 to 33% in 1990. The implications of this are considerable, since these homes suffer the greatest deterioration in terms of quality of life; more than 50% of female heads of households do not receive income from an outside job (Patiño et al., 1988, Londoño, 1995). If we add that in 1990 approximately 29% of boys and girls were not living with their biological fathers then it is clear that the demands placed on women translate into high social and emotional cost (Londoño, 1995).

Violence against women is another problem in Colombian society. Homicide against women, although not comparable with murders of men, is significant and growing in the age group 15 to 25 years. Violence is the first cause of death among women aged 15 to 44, and the sixth cause of death for women of all ages (Londoño, 1995).

While it is true that discrimination against women in general limits their access to employment and to social services such as health and education, women in some regions, such as the Pacific and Atlantic coastal regions, are particularly vulnerable. Although the two zones are significantly different culturally and geographically, they share social problems that arise from unsatisfied basic needs. The Pacific region presents the lowest indicators of quality of life in the country, and women are particularly badly affected from a very early age. The little girl in her daily life has to care for her younger brothers and sisters, wash clothes, prepare food in the home and out of it, help in the family orchards, and in mining and fishing activities outside the home. Women are well aware of this problem, as Tomasa Peña, a woman who works cleaning fish on the beach of Ensenada de Tumaco in Nariño, said in a meeting in

1988: "Here poverty belongs to women; we are the ones with the worst health, we are the worst dressed, but we are the ones who work most" (Motta, 1995).

In both these regions women play a leading role in educating their children and are the main transmitters of roles and patterns set by the family and society: a transmitter with more needs and less power than in other regions of Colombia.

Origins of the project

The first legal measures to create conditions of equality for women date from the 1920s. Law 8 of 1922 gave married women the right to administer their property of personal use. Law 128 of 1928 gave them authority to use money deposited in savings accounts. In the 1930s, the inheritance rights of married women were recognized, women were given civil rights and they were permitted to be witnesses in all court cases. Women also received the right to higher education and to paid work, were given the right to custody of their "natural" children (those born out of wedlock), and the right to apply for food assistance; and the system of investigating paternity was established. In 1945 women were given limited rights of citizenship but without the right to vote or to be elected to posts of political responsibility, but they were allowed to hold public posts that would involve exercise of authority and jurisdiction. In 1954, women's full citizenship was recognized although they could only exercise the right to vote in 1957 after a national plebiscite. The principle of equal pay for equal work was acknowledged in 1962 and was regulated in 1981, along with measures to eliminate discrimination in the workplace and to provide equal training opportunities, equal pay, free exercise of an occupation and employment, health protection, social security and maternity benefits. Paid maternity leave for eight weeks, established in 1950, was extended to 12 weeks in 1990 and the right to breast-feed the

baby during the first six months of life, established in 1967, was ratified.

In 1968, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) was created, the Health Ministry established health programmes for mothers and infants, and the Ministry of Agriculture set up projects to promote food production in family vegetable plots and for nutritional improvement. The *Plan for Comprehensive Rural Development* (DRI) and the *National Food and Nutrition Plan* (PAN) incorporated the female component in their development projects. Thanks to the new presence of women officials in charge of these areas in decision-making bodies, the National Council of Economic and Social Policies (CONPES) approved the *National Policy for Peasant Women* in 1984, although this only became an institutional part of the administrative structure in 1993. In 1975, the government presented its advances in legislation for equality to the World Conference on Women and expressed its commitment, through the *Action Plan for Women*, to promoting socio-economic, juridical, institutional and programmatic changes to enhance the involvement of women in development. In 1979 the country ratified these commitments and, in Law 51 of 1981, added those of the *International Convention for the Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination against Women*. In 1982, legislation was passed on social security in favour of women, a plan that was extended in 1988 to include domestic servants. In 1993 it was expanded with the creation of the comprehensive social security system through Law 100. The Health Ministry laid down its policy on *Health for Women, Women for Health* in its Resolution 1531 of 1992. Several government strategies based on the ICBF have emerged in the last few years: the *National Plan for Infant Survival – Supervivir*, the *Programme of Family Education for Infant Development* (PEFADI), and the *Social Programme of Welfare Homes*. Community homes (*Hogares Comunitarios*) currently have some 70,000 community mothers who attend to the needs of nearly one million

children aged under five. In 1990, the post of Presidential Advisor for Youth, Women and the Family was created, an important step in the process of institutionalizing the theme of women and gender that defined the *Comprehensive Policy for Colombian Women*, approved by CONPES in 1992. The ICBF began the programme *Family, Woman and Infancy* – FAMI – in 1991, with the aim of helping families and communities to identify and attend to the needs associated with family relations, gestation, breast-feeding and care of children younger than two, in co-ordination with health and education sectors.

The 1991 Constitution, considered one of Latin America's most advanced, maintains that:

> "Women and men have equal rights and opportunities. The woman may not be subjected to any class of discrimination. During pregnancy and after giving birth she will enjoy special aid and protection from the State, and will receive a state food subsidy if she is unemployed or unprotected.
> "The State will give special support to the female head of household." (Art. 43)
> "Children's fundamental rights are: to life, physical integrity, health and social security, a balanced diet, their name and nationality, to have a family and not to be separated from it, to care and love, education and culture, recreation and the free expression of their opinions. They will be protected against all kinds of abandonment, physical or moral violence, kidnapping, sale, sexual abuse, economic or workplace exploitation and dangerous work. They will also enjoy the other rights outlined in the Constitution, and in the laws and international treaties ratified by Colombia.
> "The family, the society and the State are obliged to help and protect the child, to guarantee his/her harmonious and comprehensive development and the full exercise of his/her rights.

> Any person can demand that the relevant authority monitor compliance with these rights and sanction intercession.
> "The rights of children prevail over the rights of others." (Art. 44)
> "Every child younger than one that is not covered by any kind of protection or social security will have the right to receive free care in all health institutions that receive funds from the State. The law shall regulate this matter." (Art. 50)

Although health is an institutional right, in practice vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and infants of less than one year of age have great difficulties in gaining access to basic health services. This fact underlies the main aim of the Health Ministry's *Care Plan for Mothers and Infants* (PAMI):

> "Contribute to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality and to the improvement of the health conditions of the mother-child dyad, by strengthening the institutions responsible for care during gestation, birth and puerperium, of the new-born and the child under one year of age, and improving access for the communities most endangered by their condition of extreme poverty, through the provision of a subsidy that guarantees that these services are available at all levels of care."

Work with women has become national policy. Projects are organized in health and in education for health, concentrating on agendas emphasising reproductive health and targeting women's domestic sphere. Campaigns are made for survival techniques such as domestic orchards and the formation of small companies. Multiple strategies are designed based on the woman as a means of family well-being. All of these aim to seek the social participation of women, calling on their roles as mothers, housewives and

wives, with the aim of improving the level of family life and enabling them to play a central part in social movements in their own regions.

Training leaders for the development of health

The project *Training Leaders for the Development of Health* began in September 1995, for one year, and is now in its final phase. It has been developed in 15 selected municipalities in three states: Chocó (six localities), Atlántico (four) and Guajira (five). Although the methodological approach has the same general guidelines in the three states, here we will only discuss the development of the project in Atlántico (municipalities of Piojó, Candelaria, Campo de la Cruz and Barranquilla).

The project responds to two demands: on the one hand, to the state's objective to supply care to those groups of the population that live in manifest social inequality, guaranteeing their access to a benefits plan; and on the other hand, to the need to have mediation between the state's social aim and the capacity of men and women to use their abilities in order to enjoy good health based on their possibilities of empowerment. This is defined as the process in which disadvantaged people work together to increase their control over events that determine their lives (Werner, 1988).

The project inherits a health policy concept that dates back to the time of doctor and anthropologist Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), who fought for a "complete and unrestricted democracy" as a fundamental part of the fight against illness (Eisenberg, 1984). "Every illness has two causes: one, pathological and the other political." The "pathological" side – viewing this concept from a symbolic-instrumental perspective – intervenes through education and the promotion of health. The "political" side intervenes by promoting a practice of participatory democracy where the social

groups represented by women, especially those from urban grassroots organizations, participate in decision-making.

The aim is to strengthen local decision-making by establishing a strategy of social participation. The general objective is to generate a process of personal, family, group and community development, starting with education for self-care for mothers and infants. To this end, the project aims:

- to contribute to health education and research, by constructing a new health culture based on the principles of participation and solidarity;
- to empower decision-making capacities of women, families and communities, through strategies of participatory education and health research;
- to encourage community actions that contribute to the promotion of health and the prevention of illness among mothers and infants;
- to establish an information system that helps officials and communities with the monitoring, evaluation and surveillance of the main dangers to mothers and infants, and of factors affecting health at an individual, family and social level;
- to strengthen the capacity of primary healthcare workers/ multipliers and the community to make an epidemiological analysis of health, and to carry out projects for health and well-being at a local level.

The target population in the four municipalities totals 8,700 families, among which 1,840 heads of families are identified, mostly women. In all, 30 primary healthcare workers act as multipliers. The CIMDER Foundation is the general co-ordinator and at the local level community nurses and nutrition experts co-ordinate with CIMDER officials. CIMDER is a non-governmental organization based in Cali, associated with the University of El

Valle. For 23 years the Centre has worked to help improve the health and well-being of the most unprotected groups in the country through research in health, training of human resources in the health sector and dissemination of information about health. The CIMDER model of primary healthcare seeks to develop the capacity of the communities to produce permanent local responses to health problems. These local responses for the social production of health are obtained by interrelating to the community, municipal government and institutions in various sectors, including the health sector. CIMDER uses strategies to promote health and prevent illness based on principles of empowerment. The institutions involved – apart from the Health Department and UNICEF – are the Administrative Department of Health for the Atlántico (DASALUD), the municipal councils of Piojó, Candelaria and Campo de la Cruz, the Municipal Health District in Barranquilla (DISTRISALUD), the health centres of Piojó and Candelaria and the local hospital in Campo de la Cruz.

Educational needs

The situation of those groups to whom the project is directed, and especially women, includes factors such as gender, social status, ethnicity, occupation and marginality, which all point towards educational "disempowerment". In the municipalities where we work, the women typically have achieved lower levels of education than the men. Consequently, they lack the freedom to leave the confines of their home and they remain within a boundary of knowledge and interests limited to their own children, their neighbours and extended family. In the case of poor women, they move in very limited confines of ability that often extend only from illiteracy to functional illiteracy. The structure of opportunities for these women also provides limited access to information: they tend to know less about the world than the men and it is

through their menfolk that they establish interactions beyond domestic life. The axis of daily action that runs from the shanty town to the local area, and from there to the regional, national and international, becomes a progressive line of development.

The numbing and impairment of learning strategies lead women to experience a blocking of their capacity to ask themselves questions, establish a critical approach to the surrounding reality, propose hypotheses and guess responses. In this way, the recognition of their own bodies, their life cycle and their many facets as women are not even able to establish themselves as possibilities and much less as questions. The non-recognition of reality leads them to ignore the civil constitutional matrix and their rights and obligations in health and other sectors of social well-being.

In the same way, primary healthcare workers, in most cases women, have educational needs of a methodological and instrumental order. They need basic training that lets them use tools in their daily work to direct a situational analysis, identify factors of risk together with their communities, process information and orient their educational mission towards an explanation of local phenomena that condition the health-disease process.

Strategies

A model of technical co-operation has been designed with four components: health education; use of the CIMDER information system in community work; health situation and quality of life; and knowledge and attitudes in health. The component "education in health" works through a strategy called the *Escuela de Madres* (School for Mothers), constructing of collective knowledge through a participatory approach in which the women can lead the process by searching for and appropriating knowledge. The *Escuela de Madres* works with groups of women organized for the promotion of health and the formation of family and community

leadership. This strategy, designed in 1989 and implemented since then in more than a third of the country's states (or departments) has the following objectives:

- to empower the participation of women, family and community in local development processes;
- to empower self-care through the social promotion of health and the prevention of risks;
- to empower community organization and participation, supporting women as leaders of activities;
- to generate mechanisms that train and consolidate family networks of learning and communication;
- to develop strategies of working towards agreements with other institutions and other sectors (Salazar and Becera, 1989).

The main objective of the *Escuela de Madres* is to provide an opportunity for women to assume the role of important persons both for themselves and their communities. For the women of *Escuela de Madres*, the meaningfulness of the experience is not only in the theme of health but also in the network of internal and external relations woven by the pedagogical model. The most powerful part of the experience is that which "puts women in contact with themselves", so that women can think about themselves as individual subjects and can think among themselves as collective subjects (Gómez and Zúñiga, 1995). In the field of well-being, the strategies encourage personal self-esteem and self-care so that the education process goes beyond the simple transmission of information and becomes a generator of a healthier lifestyle at individual, family and community levels.

Strategies are employed in phases, not necessarily consecutive, and are based on themes. These themes follow a coherent but "imaginary" thread and are aimed at generating participation. In this way, the need for women to acquire tools and elements to

exercise their right to participate is satisfied, and they themselves become the designers and builders of alternative ways to improve their circumstances. These strategies seek to empower the processes that involve health by stimulating and increasing the decision-making capacity of communities so they can generate responses which they themselves have proposed.

Methodology

The methodology is developed in five phases that seek to fulfil the proposed objective through activities that are programmed or have already been carried out and products that are hoped for or achieved.

Phase 1: Recognition, promotion, sensitization and planning

Each municipality is studied with the aim of evaluating the relevance of the proposal and of establishing the bases for an adequate follow-up of the process. The project is presented to state and municipal institutions, and to local administrators (mayors and health ministers). With diagnoses obtained from primary and secondary sources, the basic information is collected and the real situation of the community is analysed. Primary needs in health education are identified and areas for municipal intervention are located, based on the criterion of the PAMI group for protecting the population. A workshop is held on strategic analysis and another on sensitization and social security in health.

Phase 2: Promotion for participation and social development

This phase sees the generation of mutual learning processes with groups of family leaders, emphasising the development of people's initiative and creativity, their capacity to work in teams, to make

decisions and negotiate, and the construction of identity. Three workshops are held on 1) participatory education, 2) resolution of conflicts through conciliation and 3) themes of self-care in health that respond to local realities.

Phase 3: Strengthening decision-making capacity

During this phase we deal with the management of appropriate technologies: the community information system for primary healthcare (SIC-APS) advances the empowering of communities through the direct management of information. This assists the primary healthcare facilitators and educators and the community, by monitoring, evaluation and epidemiological surveillance of the main dangers to mothers and infants and of the factors affecting health at the personal, family and collective level. Three workshops are held on 1) application of the SIC-APS information system, 2) tabulation and training in systematizing the information and 3) analysis of the information.

Phase 4: Strengthening the actors for conciliation

The information obtained and processed by the multipliers is analysed. The multipliers inform the municipal authorities, officials, representatives of groups and leaders of the results. Here we stress the importance of analysing the indicators of the health of mothers and infants as an aid to local planning so that problems that need viable solutions can be identified. Four workshops are held on 1) analysis and presentation of results; 2) rights and obligations in health; 3) local participatory planning, and 4) elaboration of projects.

Phase 5: Participatory evaluation of the process

As a point of reference for this phase we have a framework document: the *CIMDER Evaluation Model.* This has two main aspects: firstly, "project implementation" – the evaluation of results, reporting the technical commitments, coverage achieved and timetables of activities – and secondly, the evaluation of the process, analysing the advances made and the results of monitoring, especially those referring to the role of multipliers and co-ordination. The four earlier phases are monitored through the use of surveys and guides that facilitate periodical evaluation with local and state co-ordinators. The final stage of this phase is the participatory evaluation when all the various actors including, where possible, the (female) heads of families covered by the project, come together to identify the mechanisms for sustaining the process. Two workshops are held on 1) conciliation with authorities and 2) participatory evaluation with heads of families.

Ideas, strength and principles

Technical co-operation in CIMDER

CIMDER uses technical co-operation from the primary healthcare workers as an entry point, given that many of the priority programmes in our country are directed towards its application. In keeping with this orientation and CIMDER's aim to contribute to improving the population's levels of health and well-being, the Centre carries out activities that respond to the following principles:

- *commitment* – the achievement of objectives is mediated by a political and social leadership that responds to the real needs of the population with a sense of social responsibility;

- *technical excellence* – the search for and strengthening of a local response is obtained through the use of activities based on standards of the highest quality;
- *forward-looking action* – activities are generated in and for the medium term, going beyond day-to-day co-operation, in a context of changing structures and achieving lasting social goals;
- *anticipatory intervention* – the functions of foresight and prediction of knowledge are developed and strengthened in the practice of co-operation, always seeking to formulate innovative alternative proposals and not only recipes;
- *non-substitution of the state* – all activities or processes should be carried out with the participation of government bodies;
- *non-creation of parallel bodies and activities* – we seek to optimize our contribution without duplicating functions or activities.

Participatory pedagogy

To achieve the goals of *CIMDER*, we need a combination of different strategies of education, planning, co-operation and research, at different levels that help to expand the information available, generate search processes and handle technology and resources. The pedagogical principles used are based on the following:

- *emphasis on the development of abilities* – the development of initiative, creativity and ability should be stimulated to analyse problems collectively, to work in teams, make decisions, plan together, conciliate and negotiate with institutions – to put it briefly, to promote "participation";

- *determination of knowledge and attitudes in health* – this is based on the fact that knowledge is assimilated more by adaptation than by impact; therefore it is important to discover in the first place what logical frames of reference and phenomenological interpretations the population has about its problems.
- *valuing the aspect of play* – education processes should take place in an environment of play, understanding this as something more than games or entertainment; play is part of our learning process and therefore combines conceptual and creative aspects and involves interaction between groups; play is opposed to the tediousness of traditional learning that frequently makes abstractions of people's spontaneous manifestations and of their cultural forms of expression;
- *horizontality in the learning process* – according to this principle, the multiplier is more an instigator than a transmitter of knowledge – this presupposes a capacity to establish horizontal relations and dialogue, with mutual confidence and enrichment, thus helping all actors to learn;
- *the problem as the hub of the learning process* – this leads to the translation of content into problems – it is precisely through collective analysis and search for solutions, that these abilities are developed and participation is strengthened;
- *use of techniques of dialogue and participation* – dialogue here means "untying the word"; it is a first and obligatory step for the stimulation of creative processes of participation through communication;
- *validation of learning in practice* – specifically in the application of knowledge generated for the improvement of living conditions, educational experiences should culminate in small participatory projects in which the knowledge and skills acquired are applied in order to transform the existing situation.

The information system as a tool of appropriate technology

Instrumentalization is a substantial feature of the models developed by CIMDER. The SIC-APS information system, developed since 1978, is a typical example of a tool designed to permit the solution of a problem and it is crucial for the management of data essential for understanding all facets of the local situation: individual, family, group and community. The SIC-APS is applied to the families assigned to the primary healthcare workers in each of the municipalities involved. This information helps to orient decisions and actions which aim to improve the levels of well-being of the said communities. The SIC-APS helps workers to function in an orderly and timely manner, given the simplicity of its application. It also has instruments to process and analyse information. In later stages, the SIC-APS provides a combination of indicators that help to direct decision-making towards the most vulnerable groups, with elements of monitoring, control and evaluation which enable the epidemiological surveillance of certain illnesses and situations that affect these groups in each one of the municipalities. The principles of appropriate technology seek to make the processes of community participation more dynamic:

- *contextualization* – the technologies should be reasonably well integrated into a primary healthcare process;
- *simplicity and ease* – they should be simple and easy to use – their use should not depend on sophisticated or costly training and should be possible for persons in the community once they have been trained;
- *adaptability to local conditions* – they should be adaptable to the social, economic and cultural circumstances of each context;
- *convenience* – they should correspond to the characteristics of primary levels of care and should be checked for their capacity

to be assimilated and incorporated into the supply of health services;

- *mirror effect* – they should rapidly reflect the health situation of a community, giving immediate responses for a particular situation that needs to be remedied.

Results and innovative aspects

The evaluation of results determines whether goals have been fulfilled in each one of the expected outcomes with respect to commitments, coverage and timetables. Commitments are all those technical co-operation activities that CIMDER has developed in its role as consultant. Coverage refers to the goals achieved in relation to the system of information on the community base, the health education of heads of families, the training of multipliers and the measurement of knowledge and attitudes. Timetables are the mainstay for the project's activities. Necessarily, the results obtained will have been affected by external factors and particular circumstances in each of the municipalities during the process (lasting one year).

We can borrow a metaphor from poetry to state that the most innovative aspect of the project is the participatory process of building an imaginary loom. An instrument manipulated by women who weave with multiple threads: self-awareness, self-appreciation, self-esteem, appropriation of knowledge, management of knowledge, political awareness and negotiating skills. The technique of weaving gives the idea of the pedagogical approach used. Like interwoven threads, social opportunities for mutual learning are created among the groups of women. The diversity of the woven design is the result of exploring and motivating people to create, initiate and appreciate group work, to discover through play, to make decisions, negotiate proposals and construct identities. As a final outcome, the women's imaginary weaving

aims to consolidate and secure the construction of real social networks.

The meaningfulness of the experience lies not only in the fact that health is studied, but also in the network of internal and external relations woven by the pedagogical model. The most powerful part of the experience is the opportunity for women to make contact with themselves, so that they can think about themselves as individual subjects and think among themselves as collective subjects. This is translated into the development of the capacity to respond in the individual, family and community environments, to the problems presented by daily life. Finally, it helps to build and appropriate a new "culture" of actions around health as an integrative framework to mobilize technical and financial resources, by presenting and carrying out projects aimed at improving conditions of well-being.

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SECTION 5:

WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 18

Women and Local Development in Popular Sectors in Urban Areas

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Introduction

Since 1986, the women's programme of *Sur Profesionales* has been developing various social intervention projects to improve the quality of life among women in urban popular sectors in Santiago de Chile. One of these was the creation, in 1988, of *The Women's House*. Our approach was to open the house to women for training in personal development under the direction of a professional team. This team offered its services to women settlers (*pobladoras*) and was intent on making their participation at a local level more effective. However, various team evaluations made us progressively change our approach. *The Women's House* then became a social intervention project aimed at resolving material needs with gender training geared to promoting women's visibility and social action.

The project began in the days of the dictatorship. Organizations were being created beyond the control of state institutions and there was no public body to guide organizations' work and management. Throughout the dictatorship, women played an

important, relevant role in the everyday survival of the urban popular sectors. Many groups and organizations developed around different objectives in order to face the emergency. Most of them created spaces in which to gather and give and receive support or show solidarity. In some cases, these spaces provided opportunities for women's personal development and for revaluing women's condition.

The project developed in the context of major change as the country underwent the process of transition towards democracy, with all the political constraints and consequences this implied. Women's organizations were also working in a context of change as regards the situation of the poor. Urban poverty had become more heterogeneous. The inclusion of the poor in the productive apparatus had diversified, and the informal sector, in which women played an important role, had grown. Life expectancy and schooling levels had increased, and people had come together to face collectively their most urgent needs. In addition, the popular sector had more support than in the past from agencies and institutions not run by the state or the political parties.

With the arrival of democracy, women's groups and associations tended to lose visibility once the traditional political party organizations gained authority and power. The organizational experience which the women had acquired did not necessarily translate into women's greater participation as protagonists in public affairs. In the sphere of economic policy, the state continued with the neo-liberal model developed in the days of the dictatorship. The state's efforts were therefore geared to consolidating the system by combining economic growth with equity and social justice. The *National Plan to Overcome Poverty* which the government has adopted may be seen in this context.

The National Women's Service (SERNAM, a ministry-level organization) was created in 1991 to study, in collaboration with the Ministry, women's equal rights and opportunities and to set out

general plans and guidelines. An *Equal Opportunities Plan* (1994-1999), establishing a set of objectives and measures to be adopted by state agencies, was subsequently approved. SERNAM, as public policy co-ordinator, is in charge of following up and evaluating the Plan and aims to have it included in the respective ministries' annual goals. This institutionalizing of women's issues has not been free from difficulties both in terms of the effect on the various sectors of the state and in relation to the response to the needs of both the organizations and the women.

An alternative for women in popular sectors

The alternative of working with grassroots women emerged for two reasons: firstly, because of the fact that certain aspects of women's condition differentiate them as a social group, and secondly, because of the form of their participation in organizations. As far as the former is concerned, reference was made to the precarious material conditions for women due to the economic, social and cultural subordination of the popular sectors as well as to those cultural aspects which deemed that women were responsible for domestic matters and human reproduction, thus structuring their identity around motherhood and limiting their possibilities for development in the public sphere. On the other hand, as far as women's participation in organizations is concerned, it had already been shown that women's incorporation into organizations did not really cause any alteration in the traditional viewpoint and their forms of participation more or less corresponded to an extension of their domestic role. This evidence, together with accumulated proof that the work with popular groups had neither generated greater participation nor led to their acting as protagonists in other fields, did not bring about any change in their gender condition.

The project

The aim of social participation set out in the project was incorporated into a broader project called *Women and Social Development,* the intention of which was to extend the experience in La Florida to another four places: Conchalí and Pintana in Santiago and Valparaiso and Concepción in Regiones. The *Women and Social Development* project therefore proposed a form of local intervention geared to strengthening women's visibility and social action. The work was characterized by simultaneous action in two fields: training (gender awareness) and community management (social action).

At this level, the team attempted to combine the solution of material problems with gender training. In other words, it was permanently concerned with implementing education and action strategies encouraging women to adopt an active role vis-à-vis society and to develop their capacity for change on the basis of their specific gender situation in the context of their condition as women settlers. This intention can be summarized as the promotion of the development of a women's movement or as the consolidation of women as social actors.

The specific proposal was to create the *Women's House*. The idea was to increase the impact, coverage and diversification of the project's experience by enriching the spectrum of activities that would allow women to go beyond training workshops and would incorporate activities directly relating to the solution of material problems, such as income and housing. The *Women's House* thus operated with activities organised in three areas: education through personal development workshops, community management through the transformation of material living conditions in regard to income and urban improvement, and both legal and psychosocial assistance.

The actors

The team in charge of the House itself was composed of professionals in various areas. Although the team preferred to work with a participatory methodology, in which the idea was to establish a horizontal relationship with the women and encourage their active incorporation in different activities, the project really continued to be a professional initiative mainly because it was led by an entirely professional team. The women basically took on the role of beneficiaries.

Throughout the intervention, some of these women started to commit themselves to the activities and to stand out because of their more active and continuous participation. These women began to collaborate with the team in certain administrative activities and later became interested in performing certain educational activities. The first training workshops for monitors took place in this context. Gradually these women began to be acknowledged and to gain legitimacy both within and beyond the *Women's House* as leaders and representatives of a women's organization. They began participating in formal events and activities in the field and in community institutions and organizations. In this period, the *Women's House* started to project itself as a more public entity that was no longer so self-centred. Women's leadership schools were organized in order to promote the emergence of local protagonists and public participation as well as to learn how to exercise power.

Although the team is still the main intermediary for the women, they are gradually broadening and diversifying their organizational and institutional points of reference. The women now plan activities together with organizations and institutions in the community, with other women's organizations and with the municipality. The resources which the co-operation agency was

contributing were subsequently applied to the *Women's House* directly via projects.

Educational needs and strategies for action

The way in which the team perceived autonomy was that the women themselves should take over the project by becoming responsible for its management and control, defining the project's orientation and direction, designing and implementing the activities, and administering and obtaining the resources needed for its development, either by generating funds themselves or by establishing links with other sources. In order to encourage this transference process, the team focused its action on three areas through which a range of tools, knowledge and information could be transferred to the facilitators in order to allow them to become autonomous: project management and administration, educational role, and project orientation.

Project management and administration

- formulation of social and productive projects;
- sources of financing;
- planning of activities and evaluation;
- budget control;
- presentation of evaluation and financial reports.

Educational role

- workshop design and evaluation consultancy;
- workshops to support the role of education;
- systematization of educational workshops via support manuals.

Project orientation

- periodical meetings to discuss, reflect on and analyse the organization's main areas of intervention, direction and profile.

These action strategies were also aimed at self-financing a core working group to head the organization. In time the group of women who had taken on the most active role in the *Women's House* thus became a stable working group. This is the group that directly received the team's training, consultancy and support activities. It gradually acquired the tools and know-how to manage the project and at the same time started to make the project's mission and ideals its own. The group developed a sense of belonging and a collective identity centred on the House.

Another strategy was to train these women so that they would be in a position to transmit the values, ideas, tools and skills that they had acquired in the course of the lengthy process to other women. In this context, the facilitators performed various activities including training workshops on monitoring and leadership. The replication methodology that was used thus became relevant as the women gradually took on the training, with the original team remaining in an advisory capacity. Manuals for trainers were developed in order to support these processes and served to help train new groups of women.

Guiding concepts

The central ideas that guided the team's actions were based on such concepts as transference, instrumental know-how, value orientations, negotiation, control, appropriation and autonomy. The concept of transference was understood as a series of activities initiated by the team aimed at transmitting instrumental know-how

and skills (information, resources, forms of working and values). The transference proposal was established as a process of negotiation and participatory negotiation so that women could actually make them their own.

At the same time emphasis was placed on the participants' appropriation process in which they chose what was of use to them from the original project. The idea was that the technical capacities and the resources which the support institution mobilized would create management and control skills among the participants in order to ensure that the project would continue working in an organized and autonomous way unrestricted by time and institutional limitations.

Management was understood as the capacity to perform, administer and implement actions. It referred to developing the capacity to adopt the project's instrumental know-how, the resources and rules. Control was understood as women's capacity to define or re-create the project's instrumental know-how, resources and rules. This dimension is linked to the power and the autonomy of both the women and the organization to define, reorientate and perform the agreed actions. Management implied performing actions within the framework of the technical proposal and the project's aims. Control, on the other hand, referred to developing skills beyond the proposal's framework, redefining, reorientating and even changing them considerably. Both concepts, management and control, were considered a continuum defining different degrees of appropriation or skill development. Management and control were understood as related concepts whereby the acquisition of one did not imply the denial of the other. In fact, being autonomous and capable of defining the work project implied the development of certain management skills.

Lastly, the concept of autonomy that was used was defined by the capacity to maintain, adapt or re-create the proposal originally formulated. In practice this meant that the project was determined

in its orientation and direction and managed in its form (the design and implementation of activities, raising and management of resources, etc.) by the women themselves.

Conclusion

In 1994, the trainers took charge of the *Women's House* and started to direct it autonomously. In the appropriation process the women gradually gave the original project specific orientations and emphasis, even taking on some of its original elements with greater force. The women thus made education the focus of the project, and the initiatives concerned with women's material needs lost importance. This is due to the fact that lower middle class and middle class families live in this area, that certain basic needs are met and that these women have a higher motivation and interest in activities related to their personal growth.

This process has, nevertheless, encountered some difficulties and obstacles along the way, often as a result of interpersonal relationships in the leading team. The way power is exercised within the organization, the involvement of new women in decision-making, and the more active participation of the other women beyond their beneficiary status, have all been causes of concern. The women leaders somehow took on the management style of the *Women's House*, which is marked by an emphasis that is more institutional than organizational and which, to a certain degree, reflects that of the professional team that gave birth to the experience. Another of the difficulties, on the other hand, has been economic sustainability, Although there have been initiatives to diversify sources of financing, these are restricted in Chile's current socio-political and economic climate so that the economic means whereby the *Women's House*'s can sustain itself have had to be scrutinized, though several seem to be prospering. One further difficulty appears in this same context: the facilitators'

progressive professionalization has changed the idea that they had of their work. This used to be understood in terms of voluntary work, and now that new expectations have been awakened tensions have arisen over the need to obtain other forms of material reward for their work.

However, the most important thing for the women is that they have progressively developed a sense of identity and adhesion to the core values and have become the protagonists of their own project and the controllers of their own personal and collective development.

Chapter 19

Self-Management in Indigenous Women's Handicrafts Micro-Businesses

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Introduction

The project set out from the need to give women opportunities to reflect on matters from a gender perspective and to generate possibilities for them to become protagonists, and to be acknowledged as such in the many interrelated spheres of their micro-social and macro-social environment. The purpose of the proposed Centre for the Development and Promotion of Self-Help was to assist the women's groups in Munaypata, a district of La Paz, to face three main challenges: to support the creation and/or consolidation of women's micro-businesses so that the women could manage them and make them profitable; to develop handicrafts as an alternative means of production in which women could express themselves, develop their creativity, reassert their identity and fulfil themselves; and to support the organization of the women themselves.

The project aims to help build gender equity in the process of sustained human development by improving women's circum-

stances holistically, promoting the acknowledgement of their contribution to development and their right to be its beneficiaries on equal terms with men. The project's practice is mainly based on the institutional premise of working with the group's own initiatives. This fundamental principle promotes the target group's self-management through women's self-help, gender equity, self-value and self-esteem. The initial objective was to generate opportunities for women to participate effectively and be actively involved. It therefore began working under the following slogan: "To strengthen women's presence is to strengthen the community." Once the project was redefined, however, self-management became our guiding principle, enabling the target group to enjoy total independence and autonomy and to improve their income through promoting and developing self-help.

The project

The programme began with a pilot project in the popular urban sector of Munaypata among a group of women from a co-operative. An initial diagnosis in 1988 showed that women from popular sectors in rural areas give priority to their economic and social problems. It was considered that in order to raise awareness and to campaign for specific gender-related demands, it would be necessary to solve these problems first. The initiative to create a productive handicrafts workshop that would work as both a source of income and a tool to bring the women together and motivate them was started in 1989 as part of the first stage. The *Machaq Qhantati* (*New Awakening*) *Women's Centre* was created as a result of this initiative. It was originally composed of 16 local women, whose first productive work was knitting alpaca sweaters.

A second stage (from 1990 to 1995) was generated by the constant feedback between theory and practice. Apart from showing what CEDEFOA had learnt and how it had matured over

the period of almost two years, the redefinition of the group's objectives symbolized the dynamics of the process: permanent change and adjustment. This stage was started because of the demands, the needs and the unsatisfied expectations of the target group. It became evident that productive work, founded on organization, should become the programme's priority and main goal in response to the target group's economic needs, thus emphasising the importance of considering the women's self-value and self-esteem.

The group now has 30 women skilled in weaving and is moving towards becoming a handicrafts micro-enterprise. Since 1994, their products have been on show at a gallery in La Paz and the women themselves cover the costs of this display space. Their self-esteem and self-value have grown through economic self-management (planning, administration, marketing and accounting, aided by computer technology), as can be seen from their behaviour and attitude.

Pedagogy, gender and innovation

The programme started by initiating a process to rediscover and improve the skills and competence of the women with a view to their new productive activity: weaving. This includes organizing handicraft design workshops aimed at improving the quality of products. In these workshops learning/teaching takes place in groups. Using their individual experience, the women create their own original designs. The facilitator's task is to contribute technical knowledge (measurement, colour combination, and so on) and to suggest ways of improving the skills and competencies they already have or of allowing these to be discovered. The workshops also propose to rescue cultural traditions by encouraging the participants to reflect on the environment and their own reality.

It is the client who finally evaluates the learning process by either accepting or rejecting the product. A circular link is thus created between the learning process, evaluation by the client and either new reflection for the redesign of the product or confirmation that the original design meets expectations.

Business management workshops are also organized so that groups of women can achieve self-management. These cover the fields of planning, production, marketing and accounting, originally using a methodology proposed by the Technical Assistance Service. This method was easy to learn, but its application tended to become rather tedious (it involved a separate ledger for each account, for example) and it did not produce good results because time is adult education's worst enemy, since adults have a lot of things to do apart from learning. As change was called for, the decision to introduce a computer accounting package into the teaching process was made.

However, as we had only one computer, this meant that we could no longer apply the group reflection method. We therefore decided to work in pairs so that everyone would have access time. By this method each woman learns how to fill in correctly the income and expense forms included in the package. The software allows each step to be worked through automatically until all the financial transactions are covered. The facilitator's role is to contribute her technical knowledge (how to fill in the income and expense forms) and supervise the dialogue that takes place between the user and the computer while using the software. The next step is for each participant to teach this system of working to a colleague. The facilitator only intervenes if something is misunderstood or when there is a need to sort out any weak points she may have detected. The group as a whole evaluates the process when the members are presented with the monthly financial report. The group's financial state is estimated at the same time as this process

is taught, thus motivating the learners. The results are measured in practice, by the women doing their own accounting.

The above is an attempt to describe the interplay between education and innovation. However, the practical workshops have also enabled us to have the opportunity to think about gender, class, ethnic groups and their respective forms of discrimination because the learning process involves all these issues. The project aims to achieve women's autonomy at three different levels: the capacity to decide, the economic sphere (access to the means of production) and identity and self-esteem. This has been achieved through self-management in business. The women have acknowledged that they are good artisans, have taken ownership of the project and have taken on the challenge of becoming businesswomen with all their capacities and rights, a success that encourages them to keep going.

APPENDIX 1

Abbreviations

CDM: Centro de Derechos de Mujeres (Women's Rights Centre) / Honduras

CEDEFOA: Centro de Desarollo y Fomento a la Autoayuda (Centre for the Development and Promotion of Self-Help) / Bolivia

CEIME: Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones de la Mujer Ecuatoriana (Ecuadorian Women's Study and Research Centre) / Ecuador

CEPRODEP: Centro de Promoción y Desarollo Poblacional (Centre for Population Development and Promotion) / Peru

CEPROMU: Centro de Promoción y Capacitación de la Mujer (Women's Promotion and Training Centre) / Bolivia

CESDER: Centro de Estudios de Desarollo Rural (Rural Development Studies Centre) / Mexico

CIMDER: Centro de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias para el Desarollo (Centre for multi-disciplinary Research for Development) / Colombia

CVM: Corporación Vamos Mujer (Let's Go Women's Association) / Colombia

FOVIDA: Fomento de la Vida (Promotion of Life) / Peru

GEM: Grupo de Educación de la Mujer (Women's Education Group) / Mexico

IAMAMC: Instituto de Apoyo al Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres Campesinas (Institute to Support the Peasant Women's Autonomous Movement) / Peru

"Las Dignas": Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Women for Dignity and Life) / El Salvador

Norte Mujer (Women North) / Chile

Sur Profesionales (Southern Professionals) / Chile

APPENDIX 2

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Gender, Innovation and Education in Latin America is the final book in a series published by the UNESCO Institute for Education and the German Foundation for International Development (*Deutsche Stiftung fur Internationale Entwicklung*) on innovation in adult education. The book examines the theoretical framework and social contexts of women's non-formal education in Latin America. It documents, in the words of women educators in the region, the varied political and social contexts which have given rise to innovative experiences in the educational sector: the legacy of the civil wars of Central America, the exclusion experienced by indigenous communities, gender violence, and the daily struggle for survival in societies where female headed households reflect the feminization of poverty levels. The notion of sorority permeates the thinking of these Latin American women. Despite the constraints of poverty and gender inequity, what shines through is their creativity and resistance, coupled with a belief in the role of education to make a difference.

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